

The Revelation

By Dr. Stephen E. Jones

<https://godskingdom.org/>

Book 1

A study of Revelation 1–2, ending in [Revelation 2:17](#).

Chapter 1: Introduction to Revelation

In some ways the book of Revelation could be considered to be the conclusion of the book of Daniel.

Daniel's prophecy focuses upon the nations who were given the Dominion Mandate after Judah failed to fulfill its terms. These other nations, however, were also doomed to failure, for they were never predestined in the plan of God to lead the world into the righteousness of the Kingdom of God. If Judah, which possessed the law of God, could not fulfill its responsibility, then how might other nations—which lacked its revelation altogether—succeed where Judah failed?

Nonetheless, God saw fit to transfer the Dominion Mandate to other nations for a season, in order to bring judgment upon Judah for its continual violation of the Covenant. When those who are called fail to fulfill their callings, God raises up alternates to do the job, even though these alternates are often worse than the those who were given the calling.

Daniel, then, reveals the succession of empires that were to arise after Jerusalem's failure. He reveals four main empires, plus an extension of the fourth known as the "little horn." Daniel's conclusion is that these empires will fall with the rise of the Kingdom of God, pictured as a "stone" carved out of the mountain with invisible Hands. This Kingdom will receive the Dominion Mandate to rule all nations under an unfailing Messiah and His body of overcomers.

The Scope of Daniel's Revelation

The revelation given to Daniel was largely limited to the first three empires: Babylon, Persia, and Greece. For the most part, he leaves to John the task of revealing the rise and fall of Rome and its extension, the "little horn." However, Daniel did receive revelation about the timing of the coming of the Messiah. He linked it to a certain decree that was to be issued by a king of Persia, telling us that the Messiah would come upon the scene "seventy weeks" after this decree.

Other revelations of timing were obscure, and there was hardly any way that anyone in the prophet's lifetime would be able to decipher these "sealed" revelations of timing. It is only by looking back in history from our modern perspective that we have any chance of unsealing such revelation.

Daniel's main historical prophecies end rather abruptly at the close of his eleventh chapter with the fall of the king of the Grecian empire, Antiochus Epiphanes. He was not the final king of the divided Grecian empire, but due to his atrocities, the Dominion Mandate was removed from his empire in 163 B.C., giving Judah a measure of liberty for a hundred years. Then in 63 B.C., Pompey, the Roman general, took Jerusalem, at which time Rome received the Dominion Mandate.

The prophetic implications of these events are fully discussed in my commentary on the book of Daniel.

Apart from the sealed time cycles in Daniel 12, the history that is foretold in Daniel reaches its real climax in the final verses of Daniel 9, where we read of the coming of the Messiah. The prophet also refers to the destruction of Jerusalem, although he says nothing about the cause of those violent times.

Neither does Daniel distinguish between the *two* comings of the Messiah and the *two* destructions of Jerusalem. Such details are left for the writers of the New Testament after Jesus made it clear that He would come "*a second time*"

([Heb. 9:28](#)). It is obvious, then, that the book of Daniel is incomplete without the revelation of the New Testament. John's book of Revelation brings the story of the Kingdom to its climax at the end of the age.

For this cause it is imperative to view the book of Revelation as a continuation of the book of Daniel and, likewise, to interpret Revelation much as one would interpret Daniel. In other words, even as we interpret Daniel historically, so also should we interpret the book of Revelation.

Qualifying for the Dominion Mandate

As with Daniel, John tells us that the Kingdom will be given to those who are qualified to rule, those who have the character of Christ. Daniel calls these "*the saints of the Most High*" ([Dan. 7:22, 25](#)), for whom "*thrones were set up*" ([Dan. 7:9](#)). John echoes this, telling us, "*And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them*" ([Rev. 20:4](#)). He says further that "*they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years*" ([Rev. 20:6](#)).

In fact, one purpose of the Revelation ("Unveiling") of Jesus Christ is to teach us the past, so that we do not tumble into the same pit into which the kings of Judah fell. Those who are qualified to rule in the Kingdom of God are those in whom Christ has been unveiled. Because of this unveiling within, they are able also to reveal, or unveil, Christ to others. They are able to judge the world by the same mind that is in Christ. When Paul wrote that "*the saints will judge the world*" ([1 Cor. 6:2](#)), he was referring to the same "saints" that Daniel revealed in his visions.

The Age of Judgment

The rise of the Stone Kingdom will have time to prove its worthiness to receive the Dominion Mandate. It will not fail as its predecessors failed. And when it has proven itself "*for a thousand years*," the great summons will be issued from the Great White Throne, calling all of the dead to appear before the Court. This event will then bring in the next phase of earth's history—the age of divine judgment until the end of time when the final trumpet will sound for Creation's Jubilee.

The release of Creation "*from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God*" ([Rom. 8:21](#)) was revealed clearly to the Apostle Paul as well as to John. John's vision in [Rev. 5:13](#) also revealed the climax of history:

¹³ And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, "To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever."

Hence, the Law of Jubilee mandates a limit, not only for commercial debt, but also for judgment for sin. (Sin is reckoned as a debt in Scripture.) The Jubilee is the Law of Grace. While it does not eliminate divine judgment, it sets the parameters of judgment, so that in the end "*mercy triumphs over judgment*" ([James 2:13](#)).

For this reason divine judgment is presented in Scripture to be *olam* (Hebrew) and *aionian* (Greek). The Hebrew word, often translated "eternal" or "everlasting," in reality means "a hidden, unknown, or indefinite period of time." The word *olam* comes from the root word *alam*, which does not mean "to wait forever," but rather "to hide, obscure." The Greek word *aionian*, is simply the Greek equivalent of *olam*, and it means "age-abiding," also an indefinite period of time.

Hence, divine judgment is not "eternal," but age-abiding. The duration of the age of judgment is obscure and hidden from us, but the divine law itself places limits on all judgment for sin (debt). Hence, divine judgment is limited by the Law of Grace.

Understanding these things ensures that we know that God wins in the end. All creation comes back to Him. All things are put under the feet of Christ, so “*that God may be all in all*” ([1 Cor. 15:28](#)), leaving “*nothing*” that is not subjected to Him ([Heb. 2:8](#)).

When we view Daniel and Revelation as a harmonious revelation of the divine plan for creation, our understanding is increased exponentially. Indeed, we ought to view the entire Scriptural record with a holistic mindset, for even though each writer is unique, each contributes his portion of divine revelation to the whole. No single revelation is complete apart from all others, nor can each revelation be understood fully without harmonizing it with the rest of Scripture.

Perhaps the most important feature of all is the relationship between Israel and the other nations, and its New Testament counterpart, the relationship between believers and unbelievers. From the start of the written revelation, God has been concerned with *all of creation* and *all nations*, not simply a portion of it, such as Israel or the Church. When God called Abraham, the promise to him was not just to save him and his family, but to be a blessing to all others—that is, to all nations ([Gen. 12:3](#)). Abraham’s greatness was not about his personal status or character, but about his ability to bless others.

The mind of God has seen fit to call the few to bless the many. Israel was called to bless all nations; the Church was called to bless the unbelievers; God’s friends were called to bless His enemies. In the end, Nineveh is converted ([Jonah 3:10, 4:11](#)); Babylon is declared to be under the feet of Christ ([Dan. 4:37](#)); Persia is likewise put under the feet of Christ ([Dan. 6:26](#)); and in [1 Cor. 15:27](#) and again in [Hebrews 2:8](#) Paul confirms the word of David in [Psalm 8:6](#), saying “*Thou hast put all things under His feet.*” [Rev. 11:15](#) also proclaims, “*The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ.*”

While many may doubt God’s ability to fulfill His promises, thinking that His will is dependent upon the unruly will of man, those who believe the New Covenant promises of God have come to see that God’s will is not subject to the will of men. No amount of opposition can withstand the will of God once He has purposed to accomplish something.

The Basic Structure of Scripture

The revelation of Scripture has come down to us in a manner structured after the Hebrew literary device known as a chiasm, or Parallelism. The overall structure is as follows:

- A. The King and the Kingdom Promised (Old Testament)
 - B. The King Presented and Rejected (Gospels)
 - B₁. The Kingdom Presented and Rejected (Acts and Epistles)
- A₁. The King and the Kingdom Unveiled (The Revelation)

Within each of these broad categories, of course, is a multitude of details. The book of Genesis, which is the beginning of the first section, is the “Beginning” that is inseparably linked to the book of Revelation, which is the “End.” The Genesis record presents to us the promised “seed” of the woman ([Gen. 3:15](#)), while the book of Revelation unveils who this is and His ascent to the throne of the Kingdom.

It takes a long time to complete the story. Meanwhile, it appears to many that the promises have failed, for they say that “*all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation*” ([2 Peter 3:4](#)). Yet Paul tells us to judge nothing before its time ([1 Cor. 4:5 KJV](#)). The promises that God made in the book of Genesis are empty words apart from their fulfillment in the book of Revelation. The course of history often seems to go in the opposite direction of the promises of God, but those who believe God’s word are not discouraged by appearances.

The connection between the Old Testament (“A”) and the book of Revelation (“A₁”) is seen in the fact that John quotes the Old Testament 285 times. This is far more often than Matthew’s gospel (92) and even the book of Hebrews (102). This alone should make us realize that the book of Revelation is essentially a Hebrew book expressed in Greek. Although the language is Greek, the concepts are Hebrew. John lived in Ephesus for much of his life and knew the

Greek language well, but his concepts and definitions were derived from his origins in Hebrew culture. Therefore, we must be careful not to assume a Greek mindset while studying the book of Revelation.

Much of the book of Revelation is based upon imagery of the temple in Jerusalem. It comes from the perspective of a priest. We know that John was of a priestly family, as I explained in my book, [Dr. Luke, Healing the Breaches, Book 8, chapter 9](#), pages 55, 56. He was familiar with temple protocol and was an eyewitness to priestly activity. John's advantage, of course, was that he had a revelation of the spiritual meaning of that which was being done carnally in the temple before its destruction in 70 A.D. He understood that the earthly temple was patterned after the spiritual temple in heaven and was meant to express spiritual truths. So we must take on John's Hebrew mindset (as best we can) in order to understand what he was telling us in Greek and, of course, in each language in which it is translated.

John's gospel is constructed from a Parallelism based upon the feasts of the Lord. The feasts are prophetic of the two comings of Christ, which in turn are the subject of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation. The structure itself, being a Hebrew literary device, shows John's Hebrew mindset as well as his style of writing.

We know from John's first epistle (also constructed as a Parallelism) that one of his main concerns was to express the love of God. It is a Book of Origins, for he shows that the character flaws of men and nations originated in the early chapters of Genesis. There he drew upon the imagery of the creation of light and darkness, the serpent and Eve, Cain and Abel, Christ and antichrist, children of God and children of the devil, love of truth and seduction to lawlessness.

These concepts form the foundations upon which the book of Revelation is constructed. John presents us with the ultimate triumph of good over the forces of evil. Creation was created "very good" ([Gen. 1:31](#)). Sin entered later and is therefore a temporary delay in the fulfillment of the divine plan for creation. Creation will be set free, and Christ will rule all that He created in the beginning. This is John's revelation of Christ.

Chapter 2: The Structure of Revelation

The book of Revelation is a Hebrew book expressed by the Greek language.

This alone binds this book tightly to the book of Daniel. The imagery and symbolism is derived from the Hebrew Scriptures. Dr. Bullinger points out that there are seven sections in the main body of the book of Revelation which alternate between scenes in heaven and scenes occurring on earth.

- A. Introduction (ch. 1)
- B. The People on the earth (2, 3)
 - C₁. In Heaven (4, 5)
 - D₁. On Earth (6:1–7:8)
 - C₂. In Heaven (7:9–8:6)
 - D₂. On Earth (8:7–11:14)
 - C₃. In Heaven (11:15–19)
 - D₃. On Earth (11:19)
 - C₄. In Heaven (12:1–12)
 - D₄. On Earth (12:13–13:18)
 - C₅. In Heaven (14:1–5)
 - D₅. On Earth (14:6–20)
 - C₆. In Heaven (15:1–8)
 - D₆. On Earth (16:1–18:24)
 - C₇. In Heaven (19:1–16)
 - D₇. On Earth (19:17–20:15)
- B₁. The People on the New Earth (21:1–22:5)
- A₁. Conclusion (22:6–21)

These seven main sections point us to the seventh letter of the Hebrew alphabet, the *zayin*, which means “a weapon.” Its root word means “to cut.” In this case, we see divine court decrees and angelic enforcement being used as spiritual weapons to bring about the desired goal of heaven. That goal is to “*put all enemies under His feet*” ([1 Corinthians 15:25](#)) and “*to subdue all things unto Himself*” ([Philippians 3:21 KJV](#)).

The Bride and Her Husband

This heaven-and-earth structure of the book of Revelation was not designed to distinguish heaven from the earth but to link them together in a cause-and-effect relationship. The goal is *unity*, not the *destruction* of the earth, nor is the goal even the *subjugation* of the earth as a slave-wife. This divine purpose reaches a crescendo in [Rev. 21:2](#), where we see the New Jerusalem coming down from heaven to the new earth that has been prepared in the previous chapters. It is pictured in marriage terms (“*a bride adorned for her husband*”). Unity and agreement is thus achieved between heaven and earth.

This has been the goal of history since the beginning. The goal was not for Christ to have a slave-wife (“Hagar” in [Gal. 4:22–25](#)), but to be married to a freewoman who can be a co-heir and co-ruler with Christ. Only a freewoman can fit the description given in [Gen. 2:18](#) of “*a helper suitable for him*.” In fact, the description of the “bride” in [Rev. 21:2](#) defines what God meant in [Gen. 2:18](#), when God cohabits *with us* on a collective picture and *in us* on a personal level. One might say that history itself is the time it takes for this “bride” to prepare herself to become “*suitable for Him*.” This is accomplished through an interaction between heaven and earth. It also presents a picture of the sovereign decrees of God in heaven which bring about the desired changes on the earth.

This is the global purpose and progression of history that the basic structure of Revelation was meant to set forth. And not only John, but Daniel too is included in this purpose—along with the entire Word of God from the beginning.

Therefore, the book of Revelation was not intended to show the ultimate *destruction* of the earth, but rather its *renewal* in the same manner that God is renewing our minds on an individual level. The destruction of our “old man” is accomplished by the salvation of the “new man.” When the Holy Spirit begets Christ in us, and then brings that Holy Seed to full birth, that which is at enmity with God passes away, but that which is in agreement with God inherits all things with Christ.

So also is it on the collective level of humanity as a whole. The first heaven and the first earth passes away, not by destruction, but by being replaced with the perfect New World Order. Heaven wins the heart of the Bride, and so the great marriage takes place.

The Revelation of the Hebrew Letters

Each of the 22 chapters contains a revelation about a Hebrew letter in consecutive order and provides an outline for the book itself.

In fact, this links the book of Revelation to Psalm 119, which is divided into 22 sections. All eight verses of each section begin with the same letter of the Hebrew alphabet. This psalm was meant to represent the revelation of the Word, which is made up of these 22 letters. The 22 letters, then, were seen as an expression of the full revelation of the Word of God. In fact, it set forth the truth from [Deut. 8:3](#), which Jesus used against the devil in [Matt. 4:4](#),

⁴ But He answered and said, “It is written, Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.”

Hence, the book of Revelation was designed to present the full scope of truth proceeding out of the mouth of God. The fact that it was written in Greek does not mean that it should be read through Greek spectacles. If John had intended to present Greek thought patterns, he ought to have written 26 chapters, one for each letter of the Greek alphabet. Instead, he wrote 22 distinct sections, which are easily divided into the 22 chapters that come to us in the present form of the book.

The Letters Outline the Book of Revelation

John says in [Rev. 1:3](#), “*Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy.*” Words are made up of letters. In verse 1 he says that these words were “signified” by His angel. The Greek word is *semaino*, which means “to give a sign.” The word is derived from *sema*, “a mark.”

Although this is expressed in Greek, the thought behind it is Hebrew. The final letter of the Hebrew alphabet is *tav*, which means “a mark or sign.” In [Ezekiel 9:4](#) the “*man clothed in linen*” was told to “*put a mark [tav] on the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations which are being committed.*” This was more than just a sign. It was the signature of God, originally written as an X or as a cross on their foreheads.

So from the beginning of the book, John subtly reveals the ultimate purpose to lay claim to the whole earth as its Owner and also to protect it. As Creator, God owns the earth and is responsible for it. Since the *tav* is the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet, we see that God signs His name at the end of the 22nd chapter. [Rev. 22:4](#) says that “*His name shall be on their foreheads.*” His name is Jesus, “Salvation” ([Rev. 22:21](#)), who signed His name on our foreheads with His mark—the cross.

Here is a list of the Hebrew letters, along with their meanings:

Alef (?) bull, first, primary, beginning ([Rev. 1](#))

Beth (?) house, household ([Rev. 2](#))

Gimel (?) camel, pride, lifting up ([Rev. 3](#))
Dalet (?) door ([Rev. 4](#))
Heh (?) breath, spirit ([Rev. 5](#))
Vav (?) nail, peg, connection ([Rev. 6](#))
Zayin (?) weapon, cut ([Rev. 7](#))
Cheth (?) fence, inner room ([Rev. 8](#))
Teth (?) snake, to encircle ([Rev. 9](#))
Yood (?) closed hand, work, deed ([Rev. 10](#))
Caph (?) open hand, palm ([Rev. 11](#))
Lamed (?) ox goad, authority ([Rev. 12](#))
Mem (?) water, chaos ([Rev. 13](#))
Nun (?) fish, swarm, teaming with life ([Rev. 14](#))
Samech (?) prop, support ([Rev. 15](#))
Ayin (?) eye, see, manifest ([Rev. 16](#))
Peh (?) mouth, word ([Rev. 17](#))
Tzaddi (?) hook, desire ([Rev. 18](#))
Koph (?) back of head, what follows ([Rev. 19](#))
Resh (?) head, leader ([Rev. 20](#))
Shin (?) teeth, devour, consume ([Rev. 21](#))
Tav (?) mark, sign ([Rev. 22](#))

These will be explained further as we study each chapter in the book of Revelation. As we will see, each chapter has something to do with each Hebrew letter.

Chapter 3: The Revelation of Jesus Christ

The title of John's book comes from the first three words recorded: *Apokalupsis Iesou Christou*, "Revelation of Jesus Christ." The term *apokalupsis* is "revelation, manifestation, appearing, or unveiling." It is a compound word: *apo* ("from, off, of separation") and the verb *kalupto*, ("to veil, to hide"). Together, the two parts speak of unveiling.

There seems to be a double meaning in this phrase. First, it is a revelation of *truth* from Jesus Christ—that is, revealing something that was previously veiled or hidden. Secondly, it presents the unveiling of Jesus Christ, who is the embodiment of Truth. In [John 14:6, 7](#) we read,

⁶ Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me. ⁷ If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him."

To believe the words of Jesus is to recognize Him as the Truth, for one cannot separate truth from its origin in His Person. We know people by their fruit.

The Sixth Sign in John's Gospel

In order to truly understand the book of Revelation, where Jesus Christ is unveiled, we should see the book not only as a continuation of Daniel, but also as a book that builds upon the Gospel of John, which he wrote earlier. In particular, it is built upon the sixth miracle-sign in his Gospel, which is found in John 9. It is the story where Jesus healed the man who had been blind from birth. His eyes were veiled until Jesus unveiled Himself to the man.

The man born blind became a believer and a disciple. In later years he accompanied the Bethany family to Provence in Gaul and became the bishop of Augusta Tricastinorum and the village of St. Restitut, which is named after him. When he moved out of Judea, he took the Roman name Restitutus (Latin: "restored"), because when Jesus healed him, his eyesight was restored. Restitutus became a living sign of the unveiling of his eyes so that he could see Jesus Christ.

John wrote his gospel to reveal, or unveil, the feast of Tabernacles. For this reason there are eight miracle signs in John's gospel, one for each of the eight days of Tabernacles. Together, they form a Hebrew Parallelism in the structure of the book.

- A. The marriage in Cana (2:1–11)
- B. The ruler's son healed (4:46–50)
- C. The impotent man healed (5:1–47)
- D. The feeding of the five thousand (6:1–14)
- D1. Walking on the sea (6:15–21)
- C1. The man born blind (9:1–41)
- B1. The sisters' brother healed (11:1–44)
- A1. The 153 fish caught (21:1–14)

While the main focus of John's gospel was upon the two central signs (presenting the two comings of Christ in D and D₁), John's book of Revelation presents C and especially C₁. We are all born blind until Jesus unveils Himself to us and removes the veil from our eyes so that we may see the truth and believe in Him. The blind man was sent to the pool of Siloam to wash his eyes, and there he was healed ([John 9:7](#)). Siloam means "sent." The meaning of this sign is given toward the end of the chapter, where the man was excommunicated from the temple ([John 9:34](#)).

The parallel story is of the man healed at the other pool in Jerusalem, called Bethesda ([John 5:2](#)). For some reason he could not walk, but Jesus told him, "*Arise, take up your pallet and walk*" ([John 5:8](#)). This speaks of the power of the resurrected life, which brings with it the ability to fulfill one's calling. Hence, the man is "sent." The meaning of this

sign is explained in Jesus' teachings recorded in the rest of John 5. It is primarily about becoming an Amen people. Like Jesus, those who are truly "sent" do nothing of themselves ([John 5:19, 30](#)), but only bear witness of Christ and His truth. In this way they "*honor the Son*" ([John 5:23](#)), rather than themselves.

As I said, the sign running parallel to the Bethesda event is the one at the pool of Siloam, where the blind man's eyes were healed. In both cases the religious leaders led the opposition, basing their objection on the fact that Jesus had healed on the Sabbath day. In both cases they appealed (in vain) to Moses ([John 5:45–47](#) and [John 9:28, 29](#)) in support of their blind viewpoint.

The Veil of the Old Covenant

The religious leaders in Jesus' time did not understand that their eyes had been veiled ever since the days of Moses, when Moses put a veil over his face to hide from them the glory of God ([Exodus 34:29–35](#)). Paul tells us in [2 Cor. 3:12–16](#),

¹² Having therefore such a hope, we use great boldness in our speech, ¹³ and are not as Moses, who used to put a veil over his face that the sons of Israel might not look intently at the end of what was fading away. ¹⁴ But their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ. ¹⁵ But to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart; ¹⁶ but whenever a man turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

When Moses veiled his face, it did not hinder Moses' eyesight. The veil hid the glory of God from the people. They were the blind ones, not Moses. Hence, Paul says, "*a veil lies over their heart.*" This veil "*remains unlifted*" as long as people retain confidence in the Old Covenant and reject the Mediator of the New Covenant. The Greek word translated "unlifted" is *anakalupto*. The KJV renders it "untaken away." Not only does the veil remain upon them in a passive sense, but it is also deliberately NOT REMOVED.

The key to removing this veil is by faith in Jesus Christ and by adhering to the New Covenant. When the two men were healed, first at Bethesda and later at Siloam, they discovered that their belief in Jesus brought them into direct conflict with those who claimed to believe in Moses. But in their blindness, they did not believe in Moses either, for the veil remained over their eyes, preventing them from seeing the glory of God that was upon Moses. Hence, after healing the man at Bethesda, Jesus told the religious leaders in [John 5:44–47](#),

⁴⁴ How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another, and you do not seek the glory that is from the one and only God? ⁴⁵ Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father; the one who accuses you is Moses, in whom you have set your hope. ⁴⁶ For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote of Me. ⁴⁷ But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?

In other words, they did not seek to pierce the Old Covenant veil on Moses's face to see the glory of God. They were content with receiving glory from one another through titles, positions of authority, and self-righteous reputation. They appealed to Moses, only to find that Moses was a witness against them in the divine court.

The book of Revelation, then, is not intelligible to those who remain veiled by the Old Covenant. One must actually believe Moses, who testified of Jesus. One must come to Moses and request him to remove the veil from his face, so that we may read his writings with New Covenant eyes. Only then may we see His glory and understand His truth. And when Moses removes the veil from his face, we come face to face with Jesus Christ, who was the prophet similar to Moses. [Deut. 18:18, 19](#) says,

¹⁸ I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. ¹⁹ And it shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words, which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him.

This is applied to Jesus in [Acts 3:22, 23](#). The prophecy of Moses tells us that God would hold men accountable if they refused to listen to the words of this Prophet. The paraphrase in [Acts 3:23](#) is more specific, saying,

²³ And it shall be that every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.

The veil is linked to the Old Covenant, and the Old Covenant, allegorically speaking, is Hagar ([Gal. 4:24](#)) and the earthly Jerusalem ([Gal. 4:25](#)). In fact, the earthly city of Jerusalem is the visible symbol of the Old Covenant that must be “cast out” as a bondwoman ([Gal. 4:30](#)).

Hence, anyone who retains confidence in the Old Covenant and considers Jerusalem to be their spiritual mother is yet veiled and cannot see the glory of the unveiled Christ. Such people are spiritual Ishmaelites and will not be inheritors of the Kingdom unless they repent and become children of the New Jerusalem (“Sarah”). The Apostle Paul says, “*And you, brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise*” ([Gal. 4:28](#)).

Understanding Revelation

The book of Revelation was “signified” by the *tav*, the mark or sign that was originally written in the shape of a cross or X. It is as if the book was both sealed and unsealed, locked and unlocked, at the same time. The key to understanding the book is the mark of God, the *tav*, the sign of the cross, which must be upon our foreheads, as we see in Revelation 7 with the sealing of the tribes. While men may put a physical mark on their foreheads as a religious act, such physical marks will do nothing to remove the veil, as long as those people remain dependent upon Old Covenant religion.

So the title of the book of Revelation, taken from the first few words of the book, sets forth the purpose of the book itself. But apart from understanding the concept of the veil and the unveiling, most people will read the book with eyes yet veiled. Therefore, our prayer is that we would believe the words of Moses, who wrote of Jesus. Our prayer is that Moses would remove his Old Covenant veil, so that we might see the glory of Jesus Christ in the face of Moses and in all of Scripture.

Only then is Jesus truly unveiled, one step at a time, by unsealing the book of Revelation.

Chapter 4: The Proper Approach to Revelation

Jesus Christ is revealed, or manifested, by His righteous acts. This occurs on two levels: personal and universal. Both are the result of God's plan, whether our view focuses on the personal or the historical works of God. The New Covenant is the most prominent promise of God to intervene in the earth in order to accomplish His plan, which He purposed from the beginning.

The precise nature of God's promise is seen in [Deut. 29:10–15](#), where He vowed to make all men His people and to be their God. Such a promise necessitates divine intervention by an act of a sovereign God. Such an act, though it demands a response from men, is not dependent upon men's response to be effective. In fact, the promise of God is a test of will to see whose will is stronger.

In the end, then, we see God's goal accomplished, first in [Rev. 5:13](#), where all of creation honors Christ as King, and secondly in [Rev. 15:3](#), [4](#) in the Song of Moses and the Song of the Lamb.

³ ... Great and marvelous are Thy works, O Lord God, the Almighty; Righteous and true are Thy ways, Thou King of the nations. ⁴ Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? For Thou alone art holy; for all the nations will come and worship before Thee, for Thy righteous acts have been revealed [*phaneroo*, "brought to light"].

Here we see a combination of two Hebrew concepts that are set forth in the Hebrew alphabet. The righteous acts, or works, are pictured in the *yood*, as a closed hand, and the *ayin*, that is an eye signifying seeing or manifestation. When the works of God are "revealed," they are made visible for all to see. It takes a righteous act of God to heal the blindness and remove "*the veil which is stretched over all nations*" ([Isaiah 25:7](#)). When all see His righteous acts, they will glorify Him.

Perfection vs. Righteous Acts

Classic Greek culture was interested in discovering the Ideal Man. Their obsession with beautiful art and sculpture (and beauty in general) gives testimony of this mindset. This is, of course, a lofty goal, which few would find reason to criticize. But the Hebrew mindset was different.

Hebrew culture was based on works, or righteous acts, as an expression or manifestation of one's heart. Scripture sets forth two paths toward achieving this goal, each defined by a covenant. The Old Covenant sets forth righteous acts as proceeding from the will of man. The New Covenant sets forth the righteous acts of God working in us personally and in the earth in general. Both covenants possess the law, but under one covenant the law is a righteous standard imposed upon unwilling flesh, while the other covenant is a promise of God to write the law upon our hearts so that we come into agreement with Him.

The *yood* is an closed hand, signifying "the works of the law," and the Apostle Paul uses this phrase many times. It is the tenth letter of the Hebrew alphabet, which is the number pointing to the law. Shortly after Paul's conversion, he went to Mount Sinai in Arabia, where God gave him the revelation of the New Covenant. He then understood that justification and righteousness come from an act of God, not from our own works. In other words, righteousness comes by the "hand" (*yood*) of God, not by the "hand" (*yood*) of man.

The captivities of Israel and Judah show that men's vows to God, while well intentioned, cannot save anyone, simply because no man can sufficiently fulfill his vow to warrant justification. On the other hand, God has no such problem fulfilling His vows to us. The failure of the Old Covenant path attempting justification on account of the will of man must be contrasted to the success of the New Covenant path which is by the will of God.

The epistle of James does not contradict the writings of Paul, but it sets forth a *clearer* Hebrew mindset. He insists that faith is manifested by one's works. Hence, if a man claims to have faith as a believer in Christ, then there ought

to be evidence of God's work in his life, his character, and his works. This evidence is not about men doing good works by righteous character obtained by an Old Covenant vow, but rather by men doing good works as evidence of the Holy Spirit's work within the believer.

The book of Revelation, then, sets forth the righteous acts of God in the earth and in the nations. What is said about the nations is equally true of each individual within those nations. Hence, when the nations worship Christ on account of His righteous acts, they have the same motivation as individual believers who see the acts of God in their own lives. In both cases, the righteous acts of God are the fulfillment of the New Covenant. It is evidence of God fulfilling His vow in them.

The *ayin* means "an eye," but it is also the Hebrew number 70. This number signifies "all nations," for in Genesis 10 we count the origin of nations to be 70 in number. Seventy is also the biblical number for "restoration." For this reason, Adam died at the age of 930 ([Gen. 5:5](#)), falling short of God's "glory" (1000) by precisely 70 years. Therefore, the number 70 (*ayin*) is what is needed for all nations to be restored, as pictured in [Rev. 15:3, 4](#).

Interpreting Revelation Allegorically or Historically

There are some who have spiritualized and individualized the entire book of Revelation. They tend to discard the history of God's acts among the nations. In doing so, they follow a Greek mindset, rather than interpreting the book with a Hebrew mindset. Furthermore, they treat the book of Revelation differently from the book of Daniel.

Much of the early Church was expelled from Judea by persecution ([Acts 8:1](#)). The result of this scattering was that Greek converts quickly overwhelmed their Judean counterparts, and it was not long before the early Church lost its Hebrew mindset. The Church soon adopted the Greek allegorical method of interpretation. Greek religion was based on mythology—stories that were said to have meaning—and those myths were not actual historical events.

The Old Testament stories of brutality and genocide were objectionable to the Greeks, and the Church soon began to claim that these were mere allegories, rather than historical events. Hence, it was not long before the Church even began to divorce the Old Testament from actual history. They continued to insist upon the historicity of the gospels, of course; but because they did not understand the book of Revelation, they began to treat it allegorically as well.

The problem is that the book of Revelation pre-wrote the history of the western nations and the Church. This history had hardly begun in the first century, giving no one any confirmation of its historical interpretation. It took centuries before enough historical events took place that would allow a Historicist interpretation of the book. By that time the allegorical interpretation had already been deeply rooted in the Church.

It was not until the development of the printing press in the fifteenth century, resulting in the Protestant Reformation, that the Scriptures were unchained from the altar of cathedrals and given to the people. When the Scriptures could be studied independently, the Reformers discovered that the book of Revelation was a historical book written in symbols as envisioned by John. This was how the Historicist view of Revelation soon became the dominant view of early Protestant groups. It was replaced by the Futurist view only in the late 1800's through the teachings of Darby and Scofield.

The Futurist view, which dominates evangelical and Pentecostal churches today, is a more modern development in Christian thought. Unfortunately, many assume that this view has always existed, but this is not so. Certain elements of Futurism can be found in the earlier allegorical view, but yet it is unique. Whereas the allegorists divorced Revelation from history, the Futurists simply do not recognize the historical events that have already fulfilled most of these prophecies.

Whereas the allegorists spiritualized everything, the Futurists literalize everything, and since they see no historical record of the earth and sea being destroyed, they put these things into the future during a seven-year time of The Great Tribulation.

It is my purpose to set forth an alternative to both of the views above. The Historicist view believes that John's visions portrayed historical events, not by literal interpretation, but with covert symbols and signs. This view treats Revelation in the manner in which the book of Daniel is treated. The "image" in Daniel 2, the "tree" in Daniel 4, and the "beasts" in Daniel 7 and 8 were not meant to be interpreted literally, even though their reality was unquestionable. They were symbols representing nations and the spiritual forces behind them.

So also the "dragon" in Revelation 12 and the "beasts" in Revelation 13, while real enough, are not literal. They are pictures of spiritual realities which manifest through nations and other entities on the earth, much like an evil spirit manifests through individuals who are possessed.

The bottom line is that the Historicist view interprets the book of Revelation in a way similar to how the Apostle Paul allegorically interprets the two wives of Abraham in Galatians 4. Paul does not question the historicity of the story, but shows how the two women represent two covenants allegorically. In other words, in the Hebrew mindset an allegory is *history with spiritual or allegorical meaning*. Paul does not divorce history from the allegory, as did the Greeks. The Greeks saw no need for religion to be based upon actual historical events, as long as they could lay hold of allegorical teachings.

Scripture, however, is based on history—real events, not just inspired stories or parables. The fact that these historical events were full of spiritual meaning and prophecy as types and shadows of future events shows the sovereignty of God in the progressive history of creation. Hence, Daniel saw visions of future historical events, as I showed in my study in Daniel.

The book of Revelation, too, is based upon the same Hebrew mindset as is seen in Daniel. The fact that Daniel was an incomplete book, covering only the first three "beasts," implies that another book would have to be written later to complete the prophecy of the beast nations during their time of dominion. Daniel's book effectively ends in 163 B.C. with the culmination of the Grecian "beast." John's book focuses upon the fourth beast (Rome) and especially upon the "little horn," giving us details in Revelation 13 that were unknown to Daniel.

These are historical events, even though John reveals spiritual forces behind the beast and its "little horn" extension. It is no mere allegory, nor is his revelation consigned to a future seven-year period. Instead, we see a panorama of tribulation-history that covers a long period of "seven times," that is, a period of 7×360 years. Daniel covers less than 500 years of this time of tribulation. John gives us the rest of the story.

Chapter 5: Unveiling Christ in History

The first five chapters of the book of Revelation are not primarily historical, but introductory. Neither are the two final chapters historical, but form the conclusion. This does not mean that they have no historical foundation, or that the scenes pictured are unreal, but rather that they are visionary.

Further, the second and third chapters, which are the messages to the seven churches of Asia, are prophetic of church ages. As such they form an outline of church history from the first century to the present time. However, after these chapters, and before the history is set forth, the narrative is interrupted by the great vision of the throne, where John sees the end from the beginning.

Unveiling Takes Time

[Revelation 1:1](#), [2](#) says,

¹ The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant, John, ² who testified [bore witness] to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw.

As we noted earlier, this is the revelation (or unveiling) of Jesus Christ. It has a double meaning. Jesus Christ Himself is being unveiled, and also Jesus Christ is unveiling prophetic truth to His people. The historical events to be unveiled provide us with the progressive unveiling of Jesus Himself until the whole earth is full of His glory.

On the personal level, the flesh is a veil that must be torn in order to expose the glory that is within the believer. [Heb. 10:20](#) tells us that Jesus entered the holy place “*through the veil, that is, His flesh.*” His flesh veiled the inner glory throughout His entire ministry on earth, except for a brief moment at the Mount of Transfiguration, where His glory was revealed. So also is it with us. Our flesh must be overcome (“torn”) in order to unveil the glory of Christ in us.

Such unveiling takes time. No believer becomes an overcomer instantly. The flesh is put off piece by piece over a period of time, as God works in us to overthrow all idols of the heart. This is the purpose of Pentecost, our time in the wilderness, which leads us in the end to experience Tabernacles and to inherit our portion of the Promised Land.

So also is it with the fleshly nations. The nations are not instantly subdued under the feet of Christ. [Heb. 2:8](#) says,

⁸ You have put all things in subjection under His feet. For in subjecting all things to Him, He left nothing that is not subject to Him. But now we do not yet see all things subjected to Him.

Christ’s death, resurrection, and ascension guaranteed that all things would be subjected to His rule—with no exceptions except the Father Himself ([1 Cor. 15:28](#)). Even so, this was to take time. Time is History. History is the outworking of prophecy. Therefore, the unveiling of Jesus Christ in men and nations is not instantaneous, but works out through time in a historical growth and progression.

Unveiling TO US and IN US

The purpose of the book of Revelation, then, is twofold. First, it is to unveil Christ Himself *to us* and to the nations of the world. Secondly, it is to unveil Christ *in us* and in the nations. As Christ is unveiled to us in history, He emerges from within us as well, culminating in the manifestation (revelation, unveiling) of the sons of God to the rest of the world.

These two aspects of His coming are stated plainly in Paul’s second letter to the Thessalonians. He speaks first of Christ’s coming on the historical level, where He is unveiled to the world, in [2 Thess. 1:7](#),

⁷ and to give relief to you who are afflicted; and to us as well, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed [*apokalupsis*, “unveiled”] from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire.

Then Paul speaks of the unveiling in us in [2 Thess. 1:10](#),

¹⁰ when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed—for our testimony to you was believed.

This pictures the unveiling of the sons of God, when Christ is glorified “*in His saints...to be marveled at*” by all. Hence, the two events, one historical and the other personal, are said to occur at the same time, i.e., “*on that day*.” There are many who have not been taught how the sons of God will be unveiled to the world, for this truth has been hidden largely by the doctrine of the Rapture.

The Rapture theory, which was developed with no knowledge of the feast of Tabernacles, pictures the saints being caught away to heaven, rather than showing them being manifested on the earth. If they had understood the feast of Tabernacles, they would have seen that the catching away occurs on the eighth day of Tabernacles, when the sons of God are glorified. They return the same day to be “manifested” and admired (“marveled at”) by all who see them.

For a more detailed study of the feast of Tabernacles, see my book, [The Rapture in the Light of Tabernacles](#).

The Bond-Servants

[Rev. 1:1](#) identifies John as a “bond-servant” and also says that the message was to be shown to “*His bond-servants*.” The idea of the bond-servant (slave) should not be viewed through Greek lenses, but with a Hebrew perspective. Paul, too, called himself a bond-servant in [Rom. 1:1](#). Why did Paul and John favor this position? Why would they not call themselves “sons” or even “friends” of Christ? Jesus said in [John 15:15](#),

¹⁵ No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you.

Further, we read in [John 8:34–36](#),

³⁴ Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. ³⁵ And the slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever. ³⁶ If therefore the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.

A slave-master always had the authority to set a slave free, if he chose to do so. In other words, being a bond-servant, or slave, was not necessarily a permanent position. But the divine law goes beyond the act of setting a slave free. The freed slave had the option of returning to the property of his family inheritance or of returning to his master as a perpetual bond-servant. [Exodus 21:5](#), [6](#) says,

⁵ But if the slave plainly says, “I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out as a free man,” ⁶ then his master shall bring him to God; then he shall bring him to the door or to the doorpost. And his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him permanently.

No slave would wish to become a permanent bond-slave apart from loving his master. It is plain that biblical slavery is not a license to mistreat slaves ([Exodus 21:26, 27](#)). The Bible does not give masters the power of life and death over any slave ([Exodus 21:20](#)). Hence, the Bible contemplates the unthinkable—insofar as men’s views of slavery are concerned—that a slave would so love his master that he would want to remain with him as a permanent slave.

Such slaves were to have their ears “opened” by piercing their earlobes with an awl. This prophesied spiritually that the slave “heard” the word of his master and was in agreement with that word. Whereas he may have started out as an

unwilling slave, forced by the law to serve his master on account of some debt (sin), he later learned to love his master and came to serve him out of love, rather than by compulsion.

David mentioned this as well about himself, for he considered himself to be a bond-servant who loved his Master. In [Psalm 40:6–8](#) he writes,

⁶ Sacrifice and meal offering You have not desired; My ears You have opened; burnt offering and sin offering You have not required. ⁷ Then I said, “Behold, I come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me; ⁸ I delight to do Your will, O my God; Your Law is within my heart.”

This pictures a slave freely returning to his master, not out of the Law’s compulsion, but because “*Thy Law is within my heart.*” He came because his spiritual ears had been opened to hear the voice of his Master. In [Heb. 10:5–9](#) this passage is applied to Jesus Himself, who took that position, even though He was called the Son of God.

In other words, this type of bond-servant is the legal equivalent of a “son” as well as a “friend” who loves his master. Such a position is attained when one graduates from obedience to agreement and from fear to love. When a bond-servant is in agreement with the Master, he becomes the Master’s double witness. The bond-servant speaks only what he hears his Master say. He does only what he sees his Master do. Such is the unity of agreement, and this is why John calls himself “*His bond-servant John, who bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ.*”

Both John and Paul had overcome the flesh to the point where they were voluntary bond-slaves of Jesus Christ. They loved Him, and they agreed with His law. Hence, Paul says in [Rom. 7:16](#), “*I agree with the Law, confessing that the Law is good.*” He says further in [Rom. 7:25](#), “*I myself with my [spiritual] mind am serving the Law of God.*”

Paul’s testimony applies equally to John, the bond-servant. John was the disciple who loved Jesus more deeply than the others. Legally speaking, he was a voluntary bond-slave of Jesus Christ, but because of shared love and agreement, John had been raised to the position as “friend” and “son.”

The Number 14

When John presents us with the Hebrew concept of a bond-servant, the importance of this idea is undergirded by numbers. The Greek word *doulos* (bond-servant) is used 14 times in the book of Revelation ([Rev. 1:1](#) [twice], 2:20, 6:15, 7:3, 10:7, 11:18, 13:16, 15:3, 19:2, 19:5, 19:18, 22:3, 22:6).

Fourteen is the biblical number that means “deliverance, or release.” For this reason, Israel was released from bondage in Egypt on the fourteenth day of the first month (Passover). In the book of Revelation, the bond-servants of Christ are those who were released, but who returned voluntarily to become perpetual bond-servants to the Master that they loved. They returned as friends and are honored as sons, for those whom the Son sets free are “*free indeed*” ([John 8:36](#)).

When we understand the law of voluntary bond-servants, and when we see how Jesus set free His disciples into the glorious liberty of the children of God, we can then also understand the phrase “*free indeed*.”

My friend, Mark, who has studied Greek for many years, tells me that *doulos* literally means, “to swallow up one’s will in the will of another.” This is what happens when a voluntary bond-servant comes fully into agreement with the will of the Master. Such unity is the full outworking of divine love. At one time Mark was asked a question: “What is the perfect picture of the Father’s love?” His response was, “Agape is pictured in the bond-servant.”

Hence, John uses *doulos* fourteen times to tell us that these are not mere bond-servants, but voluntary bond-servants who have returned as friends and as sons of God.

The Memra of God

The book of Revelation is an extension to the book of Daniel, but it is also a sequel to the Gospel of John. The introduction to the book of Revelation, emphasizing the idea of the bond-servant, is a restatement of the introduction to John's gospel, where he presents Christ as the Logos, translated "the Word."

No translation adequately expresses the Hebrew concept of the Logos. It is the equivalent of the Hebrew *Memra*, which I described in the last chapter of my book, [Dr. Luke, Healing the Breaches, Book 1](#). The Memra is the top position above ordinary rabbis and even above rabbis "with authority." It was a messianic term, describing a rabbi with authority who had become so perfected that his very life was the fulfillment of the law. He was the word made flesh, the living word, manifesting the word in all he might say and do.

The Jewish Encyclopedia tells us that the *Memra* is the equivalent of the Greek word *Logos*. It says further, "Memra has laid the foundation of the earth" (Targ. Isa. xlviii. 13). The Memra is "the consuming fire" and the Shekinah, or the manifestation of God.

Perhaps the most significant description of the Memra in The Jewish Encyclopedia—at least for our purposes—is its statement:

"My Memra shall be unto you like a good plowman who takes off the yoke from the shoulder of the oxen."

The imagery presented here shows that the Memra was called to set the bond-servants free. This is what Jesus did when he set His disciples free. This is the force behind the title of "bond-servant" used by both Paul and John.

In effect, the Memra came to bless us by turning the bond-servants of God into love-slaves. These, then, are the blessed ones who read the book of Revelation with understanding, so that they are able to come into agreement with the mind of Christ.

The Blessed Ones

[Rev. 1:3](#) is the final verse of the introduction to the book of Revelation.

³ Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near.

The word translated "blessed" is *makarios*. It is the word used in the Beatitudes to set forth the condition of a person who lives a blessed life. It is not the same as the act of blessing someone or something, which is *eulogio*, the word used in [Matt. 14:19](#) when Jesus blessed the food.

The Septuagint shows that the Greek word *makarios* is the equivalent to the Hebrew word *asir* (or *asher*). Asher is the name of one of Jacob's sons, named because when he was born, his mother considered herself "happy" or "blessed." It is the first word of the first Psalm: "*Blessed is the man ...*" The word describes the condition of one who walks in the joy of the Lord. It describes the state of the perpetual bond-servant.

So John uses the word *makarios* to show the blessed condition of those who read and hear the book of Revelation. No doubt this brings a smile of incredulity to many faces, since the book is probably the most misunderstood in Scripture. Most are discouraged when they read it, because they do not truly "hear" what they read. Apart from the revelation of the Holy Spirit, the book remains sealed, even though John saw the breaking of the seals.

Read, Hear, and Heed

John's instruction is to read, hear, and heed the contents of this book. This follows the Hebrew concept where hearing and obeying come from the same word, *shema*. In other words, if someone claims to have heard something, and yet

The Revelation: Book 1 - Chapter 5: Unveiling Christ in History

failed to respond in some way, he did not really “hear.” Hearing is more than hearing with one’s ear. It includes the response as well—something that is clearly set forth in the epistle of James. He tells us in [James 1:22](#),

²² But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.

Again, in [James 2:17, 18](#) he says,

¹⁷ Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself. ¹⁸ But someone may well say, “You have faith, and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works.”

Faith comes by hearing ([Rom. 10:17](#)), but the Hebrew concept of hearing includes a response. Only the dead are unresponsive. So also John sets forth the state of the blessed man, who reads, hears, and takes heed. Therefore, we ought to watch for opportunities to use what we read as instruction toward a course of positive action. Specifically, the seven churches each were given a message that called for a change of heart that should have resulted in a change in their behavior (or “works”).

In fact, even the historical prophecies of the book have the power to change our behavior. For this reason, as we will yet see, the divine judgments set forth in the book include a call to repentance. Unfortunately, in the revelation of the rise of Islam in chapter 9, we find that the church as a whole still refused to repent and did not acknowledge that God had raised up Islam to judge the church for its own sin. [Rev. 9:21](#) tells us,

²¹ and they did not repent of their murders nor of their sorceries nor of their immorality nor of their thefts.

It has been said that those who do not know history are doomed to repeat it. The book of Revelation prophesies the history of the church, so that the blessed man may read, hear, and take heed. History, indeed, is really His Story. We ought to acknowledge that God is the Author of history, and that history is the account of the progression of the Kingdom of God. If we “hear” the prophecy of history, we may either prepare for the future or learn from the past, depending on the time in which we live.

Things Which Must Soon Take Place

John says in the first verse that he was shown things that would “soon” take place. This is a reference to the historical events that are revealed in the book itself. The Greek word is *takhos*, which means “quickness, speed.” [James 1:19](#) uses the same term when he says we should be “*quick to hear*.”

The word implies that the message in the book of Revelation was something that would come to pass sooner, rather than later. The word fits the Historicist view of Revelation better than the Futurist view, which puts the events off to the far future. However, the time is indefinite, and God’s “soon” does not necessarily conform to our mortal perspective of time. So we cannot press the issue too much. Nevertheless, in order for the term to have any meaning at all to those who hear John’s testimony, it seems to support the idea that these events were to begin in John’s day or shortly thereafter.

Chapter 6: John to the Seven Churches

While the first three verses are John's introduction to the book of Revelation, verse 4 begins John's message with a salutatory introduction. [Rev. 1:4](#), [5](#) says,

⁴ John to the seven churches that are in Asia:

Grace to you and peace, from Him who is and who was and who is to come; and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne; ⁵ and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the first-born of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.

John's book was addressed as a letter to the seven churches. It was not from John alone, but also from Jesus Christ. The pen was John's, but the message was from Jesus.

Grace and Peace

He sends two things to the churches: grace and peace. This was Peter's greeting in both of his epistles. It was Paul's standard greeting as well ([Titus 1:4](#); [Rom. 1:7](#); [1 Cor. 1:3](#), [2 Cor. 1:2](#), etc.).

"Peace" should be understood as the standard Hebrew greeting: *shalom*, which is a blessing of wholeness in health, safety, completeness, well-being, and harmony. Grace appears to be a New Covenant addition ([John 1:17](#)) to the standard blessing.

There are other implications of *shalom* when used in related forms. The Wikipedia notes,

The conjugated verb has other spins that are worth noting, such as: "Hishtalem" meaning "it was worth it" or "Shulam" as "it was paid for" or "Meshulam" as in "paid in advance," Hence one can jokingly say that, "when it's paid-for then there is peace."

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shalom>

John apparently had this in mind when he wrote in [Rev. 1:5](#), "To Him who loves us, and released us from sins by His blood." His calling was to make peace and to restore us to a full and complete relationship with God by paying the penalty for the sin of the whole world ([1 John 2:2](#)). Without the cross, which extended grace, *shalom* could only remain a hope and a longing for one who was qualified to make it happen. In that sense, Moses brought the hope for peace, but Jesus brought grace to make it possible. But when the legal problem of sin's debt was resolved in the divine court, ending the controversy that the law had against us, the Judge was able to extend grace (a favorable ruling) to us.

Even more, grace describes us as being in a state of honor in the divine court, allowing the court to hear petitions and cases brought by intercessors.

Yahweh, the Everlasting God

John describes God in a typical Hebrew paradox: "from Him who is, and who was, and who is to come." This is essentially the definition of Yahweh, the Ever-living, the Ever-existing, the Timeless One, who spans the present, past, and future. In [Gen. 21:33](#) Abraham "called on the name of Yahweh, the Everlasting God."

Yahweh is said to be *olam* ("hidden, unknown, obscure"), here translated "Everlasting." The word is more specifically understood as a time of existence that is unknown to us—in this case because our minds are finite and limited, unable to comprehend eternity. The psalmist contemplated this when he wrote in [Psalm 90:1](#), [2](#),

¹ **Yahweh, Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.** ² **Before the mountains were born, or Thou didst give birth to the earth** [*eretz*, “land, territory”] **and the world** [*tebel*, “inhabitable globe”], **even from everlasting** [*olam*, unknown past] **to everlasting** [*olam*, unknown future], **Thou art God.**

Greetings from the Seven Spirits

John also brought the churches greetings “*from the seven spirits who are before His throne.*” The apostle obviously had communicated with these seven Spirits after he was caught up through the open door to the throne ([Rev. 4:1, 2](#)). Their presence is acknowledged in [Rev. 4:5](#),

⁵ **And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.**

John had returned with a message, not only from God Himself, but also from the seven Spirits of God. According to [Isaiah 11:2](#), these Spirits are:

1. The Spirit of the Lord (*Yahweh*)
2. The Spirit of Wisdom (*Chokmah*)
3. The Spirit of Understanding (*Biynah*)
4. The Spirit of Counsel (*Etsah*)
5. The Spirit of Strength (*Gevurah*)
6. The Spirit of Knowledge (*Da'ath*)
7. The Spirit of the Fear (*Yira*) of the Lord (Yahweh)

These Spirits are not impersonal forces, but angels—archangels, or perhaps angels that stand above the archangels themselves. As angels with personality and callings, they could speak with John and could give greetings to the seven churches. There are multitudes of angels of lesser rank, each directly supporting one of these seven Spirits.

[Heb. 1:14](#) says of angels in general,

¹⁴ **Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of** [*dia*, “through”] **those who will inherit salvation?**

Collectively, the Seven Spirits form the Holy Spirit, which was given to the church at Pentecost. The Holy Spirit indwells us and ministers to others *through* us, as do all other angels who are assigned to us. Our angels determine our callings and empower us to fulfill those callings.

So we read in [Acts 8:26](#) that “*an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip*,” telling him to go to Gaza, where he met the Ethiopian eunuch. But [Acts 8:29](#) says,

²⁹ **And the Spirit said to Philip, “Go up and join this chariot.”**

In this case, Philip’s “angel” was “the Spirit” who was ministering through Philip. As we will see later, the seven Spirits were distributed to the seven churches in order to bring heaven to earth in the complete manifestation of the Kingdom of God. Each church, however, was imperfect, but the seven Spirits worked through the overcomers during each church age, so that the Kingdom could come in the end.

The Faithful Witness

[Rev. 1:5](#) says that this book was also a message “*from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness.*” Later, in the message to the church of the Laodiceans, Jesus is again called “*The Amen, the faithful and true Witness*” ([Rev. 3:14](#)). This gives a more complete picture, helping us to define a “faithful witness.”

A witness is one who reports what he has seen or heard. Witnesses are called to speak the whole truth and nothing but the truth. The problem is that many earthly witnesses see different things. But Jesus is “the Amen” of God, giving testimony only to what He has seen and heard. The fact that He is a “faithful” witness means that He was faithful to testify of the *whole* truth. The fact that He is a “true” witness means that His testimony was accurate in every detail—that is, He spoke nothing but the truth.

The First-born of the Dead

[Rev. 1:5](#) tells us that Jesus Christ was not only “the faithful witness,” but also “*the First-born of the dead*.” Others had been raised from the dead in the days of Elijah and Elisha. Jesus also raised Lazarus from the dead before He Himself was raised. However, all of these were raised back to a mortal state, and they all died again later. Jesus was the First-born from the dead to be raised to immortality.

The Emphatic Diaglott renders this, “*the chief-born of the dead*.” The term is *prototokos*, where *proto* carries the meaning of being first both in time and in rank. It appears to be a synonym for *monogenes*, the “only-begotten” Son. Paul uses the term *prototokos* in [Col. 1:18](#), where he links this to Christ’s preeminence over creation,

¹⁸ He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything.

This idea derives from the law of the first-born in [Deut. 21:15, 16, 17](#). The law sets forth the rights of the first-born son in order to protect those rights in case he is “hated” (or “unloved”). In this case, Jesus Christ is the First-born, but yet the bulk of humanity does not love Him, and various religions want to replace Him with their own gods or prophets. The law, however, does not permit this and in the end will enforce the rights of the First-born Son.

The Ruler of the Kings of the Earth

[Rev. 1:5](#) also calls Jesus the Ruler, or Prince, who is over the kings of the earth. The book of Revelation is the drama of history, showing how the opposition to Christ is overcome steadily until He is crowned King of kings and Lord of lords. [Rev. 17:14](#) shows this opposition and its end, saying,

¹⁴ These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him are the called and chosen and faithful.

John says that the Lamb wins His position *because* He is Lord of lords. The underlying implication is that the divine law recognizes Jesus as the Lord of lords and King of kings because He is the First-born Son. The law sets forth the will of God ([Rom. 2:18](#)), and it is prophetic because God will always get His way and achieve His goal. The historic opposition can be only temporary, because the will of men and kings is never able to overcome the will of God.

He Who Loves Us

Jesus Christ was the First-born from (*ek*) the dead, because He was willing to die. It was His love that motivated Him to die for the sin of the world. His death paid the penalty and “*released us from our sins by His blood*” ([Rev. 1:5](#)), extending grace to all.

[Rev. 1:6](#) continues to speak of Jesus, saying,

⁶ and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father; to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever [*aionas ton aionon*, “for the ages of the ages”]. Amen.

The Kingdom

The primary purpose of releasing us from our sins (vs. 5) is to form us into a kingdom. It is comparable and directly related to an earlier day when God established His kingdom in [Exodus 19:6](#), saying, “*and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.*” This is how we are to understand [Rev. 1:6](#) as well, although the NASB translators did not seem to understand this. Perhaps they were thinking in Greek, rather than in Hebrew.

The Wycliffe Bible Commentary, p. 1502, in its commentary on [Rev. 1:6](#), tells us,

“The statement that Christ has made us to be a kingdom of priests unto God (v. 6) is from the basic declaration in [Ex. 19:6](#), quoted centuries later by Peter ([1 Pet 2:5, 9](#)).”

This kingdom is formed in two stages, the first being a Pentecostal kingdom whose type and shadow is the kingdom of King Saul. The second stage is the Tabernacles kingdom whose type and shadow is the kingdom of King David. Saul himself was crowned on the day of “wheat harvest” ([1 Samuel 12:17](#)), that is to say, Pentecost. In contrast, David was crowned on the 59th Jubilee from Adam.

The Pentecostal kingdom is a legitimate, but leavened kingdom ([Lev. 23:17](#)). The solution to the leaven was to give the church the baptism of fire ([Matt. 3:11, 12](#)), so that the “chaff” might be burned up. Those who truly receive this baptism of the fiery presence of God are the ones truly keeping Pentecost.

Priests

Secondly, Christ is making us to be “priests.” Here again, there are two kinds of priests described in Scripture—one good and one bad. Ezekiel 44 speaks of both in the context of the Old Covenant, but yet prophesying of a later time when the church too would have priests that were both good and bad.

In the Old Covenant era, Eli and his sons were the main types of bad priests. [Ezekiel 44:10–12](#) calls them idolatrous. The good priests are “*the sons of Zadok*” ([Ezekiel 44:15](#)). Zadok, of course, was the high priest who replaced the last of the line of Eli ([1 Kings 2:27, 35](#)). This story prophesies how the Melchizedek Order would replace the Levitical Order of priests that had become corrupted. The name *Zadok* appears in *Melchizedek*.

And yet Ezekiel was also prophesying of a later time when the priesthood in the church would also corrupt itself. Those priests have reverted back to Old Covenant practices and thought patterns, disqualifying themselves from the Melchizedek Order. Hence, the message to the seven churches sets forth “*him who overcomes*,” contrasting them with those who do not overcome. The overcomers are the ones that Christ is forming into the priesthood for ministry in the age to come.

Hence, even as Abiathar (the last of Eli’s line) was disqualified under the Old Covenant, so also is there a priesthood under the New Covenant that will be disqualified. In both cases, those disqualified will be replaced by those who are found worthy. This is one of the key issues at the time of the first resurrection in [Rev. 20:6](#), where the overcomers are raised to immortality as king-priests of the Melchizedek Order.

This priesthood theme is rooted in the types and shadows long before Christ came. Those types were explained further by the prophets—especially Ezekiel. The book of Revelation completes this progression of revelation. John can hardly be understood without knowing what Ezekiel was telling us, along with the stories of Eli and Zadok which form the foundation of his prophecy.

In fact, the qualifications for priesthood are set forth in the law. [Lev. 21:17–21](#) disqualifies Old Covenant priests on the basis of physical defects; but because “*the law is spiritual*” ([Rom. 7:14](#)), the same law applies in a spiritual way to priests under the New Covenant. Each physical defect has a corresponding spiritual defect that disqualifies people from the Melchizedek Order.

Forever and Ever

[Rev. 1:6 \(NASB\)](#) reads, “to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever.”

Many translations, along with the NASB, make this error. Other translations are more correct:

“to Him be the glory and the might for the ages of the ages. Amen.” (The Emphatic Diaglott)

“to him is the glory and the power to the ages of the ages. Amen.” (Young’s Literal Translation of the Holy Bible)

“Unto him be the glory and the dominion, unto the ages. Amen.” (Rotherham, The Emphasized Bible)

“to Him be glory and might for the eons of the eons. Amen.” (The Concordant Literal New Testament)

No one disputes the fact that Christ will have glory and dominion for eternity. Yet the phrase *aionas ton aionon* is based on the indefinite word *aion*, which is an eon or age. In the end, however, we must define the term according to its Hebrew equivalent, *olam*, which means “hidden, indefinite, unknown.” By themselves, neither *aion* nor *olam* can be used to express infinite time. Indefinite is not the same as infinite. Indefinite might refer to infinite time, but only if the context demands it.

In the case of [Rev. 1:6](#), where Christ’s glory and dominion is said to be *aionas ton aionon*, we know that His glory will never end. Neither will His kingdom end, because [Dan. 2:44](#) tells us that “*in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed.*”

Even so, John’s wording in [Rev. 1:6](#) is not so clear in regard to Christ’s “dominion.” If he means the Kingdom, then certainly it will never be destroyed, but will endure forever. But when we speak of Christ’s personal reign, [1 Cor. 15:25, 26](#) says,

²⁵ For He must reign until He has put all enemies under His feet. ²⁶ The last enemy that will be abolished is death.

Paul says that Christ’s “reign” will end in some way. How will this end? The answer is found a few verses later in [1 Cor. 15:28](#),

²⁸ And when all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, that God may be all in all.

It is not that Christ will cease to reign, of course, but this shows that something new will be brought in after death is destroyed. Christ will present the perfected Kingdom to the Father. In that sense, one might say that the kingdom will no longer be Christ’s, but the Father’s Kingdom. The “dominion,” in its absolute sense, will shift from Christ to the Father, making Christ subject to the Father, even though He retains His authority over humanity and creation.

Knowing this, we may ask ourselves what John meant in [Rev. 1:6](#), when he tells us that Christ’s “dominion” is for *the ages of the ages*. We may interpret this in two ways. First, we may say that the context demands that the indefinite “ages of the ages” be understood as never-ending, since Jesus Christ will always enjoy dominion over creation, even when he is second in authority to the Father. Second, we might argue that John deliberately used the indefinite phrase, “ages of the ages,” in order to show that Christ’s top “dominion” was to end in the far future when the last enemy has been destroyed.

Both views are true, but in my view we do not have sufficient evidence to prove precisely what John meant.

John’s “Amen” at the end of this verse gives his affirmation and agreement with what has been said.

Chapter 7: Christ's Second Coming

John continues in [Rev. 1:7](#),

⁷ Behold, He is coming with [meta] the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. Even so, Amen.

The concept of the Messiah “*coming with the clouds*” is a reference to [Dan. 7:13, 14](#), where the prophet speaks of the time where the nations are judged:

¹³ I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven, One like a Son of Man was coming, and He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. ¹⁴ And to Him was given dominion, glory, and a kingdom ...

Jesus applied Daniel's prophecy to Himself at His trial before the Council. When the high priest adjured Jesus to speak the truth (according to the law in [Lev. 5:1](#)), Jesus was obligated by law to speak the whole truth and nothing but the truth. [Matt. 26:64](#) says,

⁶⁴ Jesus said to him, “You have said it yourself; nevertheless I tell you, hereafter you shall see the Son of Man at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

The high priest, assuming that Jesus was an imposter, tore his robes and sentenced Him to death on a charge of blasphemy (perjury). But John contradicts Caiaphas, asserting that Jesus' testimony was true. Jesus is indeed the One coming to be presented to the Ancient of Days to receive “*dominion, glory, and a kingdom*.”

While some may claim that this prophecy was fulfilled when Christ ascended to the throne in heaven, it is my belief that it was fulfilled only partially at that time. Consider Jesus' parable about the nobleman going into a far country to receive for Himself a kingdom and to return ([Luke 19:12](#)). It was one thing to be *granted authority*, but quite another to *receive the kingdom*. Taking the kingdom from the usurpers is what Christ must yet do at the time of His second coming.

Herod the Great is a good example of how this principle works. He went to Rome to obtain backing and authorization to be king. Then he returned to take it from Antigonus, his rival. Hence, receiving authorization from a higher power is not the same as actually taking possession of the kingdom. So is it with Christ Himself. He ascended to heaven to receive the kingdom (legally), but He must return to wrest it from the usurpers and physically take possession of it.

The interim kingdom between the two comings of Christ is depicted as a Saul kingdom, ruled by the tribe of Benjamin, rather than of Judah. Hence, Christ not only approached the Ancient of Days to receive a kingdom, but He also comes “*with the clouds*” to take possession of the earth as the King of kings and Lord of lords. In doing so, He takes dominion over the beast nations, “*that all the peoples, nations, and men of every language might serve Him*” ([Dan. 7:14](#)).

Every Eye Will See Him

In connection with Christ's coming in the clouds, [Rev. 1:7](#) continues,

⁷ ... every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. Even so, Amen.

John was paraphrasing [Zech. 12:10](#), which says,

¹⁰ And I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as

one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him, like the bitter weeping over a first-born.

In John's paraphrase, he equated Christ's coming with the outpouring of "*the Spirit of grace and of supplication.*" When John says, "*every eye will see Him,*" he was commenting on Zechariah's statement, "*they will look on Me.*" Zechariah did not say how many of the people would see Him, but John says, "*every eye will see Him.*"

The Piercing

John specifically includes those who "pierced" Him, i.e., the Jews (not the Romans). John quoted this verse in Zechariah previously in his account of the crucifixion, when he wrote in [John 19:35–37](#),

³⁵ And he who has seen has borne witness, and his witness is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you also may believe. ³⁶ For these things came to pass, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, "Not a bone of Him shall be broken." ³⁷ And again another Scripture says, "They shall look on Him whom they pierced."

John was at the foot of the cross when Jesus was crucified. He was an eyewitness. It has become fashionable in recent years to blame the Romans for crucifying Jesus. But Zechariah prophesied that the Jews would pierce Him, and the law itself prophesies that the priests were the ones who would offer the sacrifices. Likewise, in [Acts 4:10](#) Peter speaks to the high priest and his family "*by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene whom you crucified.*" Later, Stephen said to the high priest in [Acts 7:52](#)

⁵² Which one of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who had previously announced the coming of the Righteous One, whose betrayers and murderers you have now become.

The Bitter Weeping

John continues in [Rev. 1:7](#) to say that "*all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him.*" He does not say, all the tribes of Israel. His scope is the whole earth, wherein are many tribes of people. This suggests a fulfillment of the Abrahamic call, which was to be a blessing to all the families of the earth ([Gen. 12:3](#)). Yet John says specifically that it includes those who pierced Him.

Zechariah's prophecy tells us that when the Spirit of grace and supplication is poured out, it will cause mourning and bitter weeping. To "look upon" Christ is to recognize Him for who He is. The big lie will then be exposed. That generation will then realize that their first-century religious leaders had lied to them. [Matt. 28:11–15](#) records the nature of that lie, saying,

¹¹ Now while they were on their way, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all that had happened [i.e., Jesus' resurrection]. ¹² And when they had assembled with the elders and counseled together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, ¹³ and said, "You are to say, 'His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we were asleep.' ¹⁴ And if this should come to the governor's ears, we will win him over and keep you out of trouble." ¹⁵ And they took the money and did as they had been instructed; and this story was widely spread among the Jews, and is to this day.

When the Jewish people learn how their religious leaders betrayed them, they will weep bitterly as when a first-born son is killed.

The Consequences

There is more to this bitter weeping than some care to acknowledge. Certainly, they will weep and repent for their past rejection of Christ. Yet sin has consequences, especially long-standing hostility against God. Jesus' parable of the

vineyard in [Matt. 21:33–41](#) shows the consequence of killing the Son of the Owner of the vineyard. In fact, Jesus allowed the chief priests and elders to judge themselves. He asked them,

⁴⁰ “Therefore when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vine-growers?” ⁴¹ They said to Him, “He will bring those wretches to a wretched end, and will rent out the vineyard to other vine-growers, who will pay him the proceeds at the proper seasons.”

Jesus’ verdict is given in verses 42–44,

⁴² Jesus said to them, “Did you never read in the Scriptures, ‘The stone which the builders rejected, this became the chief corner stone; this came about from the Lord, and it is marvelous in our eyes’? ⁴³ Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and be given to a nation producing the fruit of it. ⁴⁴ And he who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust.”

Here Jesus draws upon two distinct prophecies. The first is from [Psalm 118:22, 23](#), where the stone that is rejected becomes the chief corner stone. Jesus is that stone. The second is the stone of [Dan. 2:35](#), where “*the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold [kingdoms] were crushed*” and “*became like the chaff from the summer threshing floors.*” The stone (Kingdom of God) then grows until it fills the whole earth.

Jesus gave warning to the Jewish nation that the same stone that was rejected by the Jewish nation was the stone that will grind all the nations—including their nation. “*Therefore,*” Jesus prophesied, “*the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and be given to a nation producing the fruit of it.*” Who, then, will receive this Kingdom? It is the overcomers—not the whole church, but those who actually produce the fruit of the Spirit that God has desired from the beginning.

Here again it is important to understand the function of the three feast days. Passover brings justification; Pentecost brings sanctification; Tabernacles brings glorification. If believers do not grow through Pentecost, how can they bring forth the fruits at the time of harvest, when Tabernacles is celebrated?

By rejecting the Passover Lamb, the Jews (as a nation) did not even keep the first feast in the manner that God required. When Christ comes “*with the clouds,*” they will recognize the Lamb of God and “keep” the Passover in the acceptable manner through the New Covenant. However, they will not have time to grow spiritually, and therefore, they will not be qualified to rule in the Kingdom. They will find that the Kingdom of God has been taken from them, and that their physical genealogy does not qualify them as Melchizedek priests.

David’s Return to Jerusalem

When David’s throne was usurped by Absalom ([2 Sam. 15:10](#)), David left town by way of the Mount of Olives, where he made a sacrifice ([2 Sam. 15:30, 31, 32](#) KJV). This prophesied of Jesus’ Sacrifice at the same location. Ahithophel, David’s friend, betrayed him, even as Judas later betrayed Jesus. Shimei stoned David ([2 Sam. 16:5, 6](#)), even as Jesus too was stoned while on the cross—as all who were accused of blasphemy were treated, aiming for the face. “*So His appearance [visage, face] was marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men*” ([Isaiah 52:14](#)).

David spent an unknown amount of time in the wilderness; Jesus ascended to heaven for an unknown amount of time. When David returned to reclaim his throne, it prophesied of the second coming of Christ. The most relevant prophecy in David’s return was the fact that Absalom was killed ([2 Sam. 18:14](#)). Absalom, the usurper, did not rule with his father after David’s second coming. So also will the usurpers of Christ’s throne suffer a similar fate.

Other Evidence

Matthew records another Kingdom parable that Jesus told in [Matt. 22:1–14](#). A king was giving a wedding feast for his son. Those who were invited refused to attend the wedding. Moreover, they mistreated and killed the messengers ([Matt. 22:6](#)). So we read the reaction of the king in [Matt. 22:7](#),

⁷ But the king was enraged and sent his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and set their city on fire.

The king then sent other messengers into the streets to invite others to the wedding feast. Some of them were not dressed properly in the garments of salvation, and these too were cast out later ([Matt. 22:13](#)). The moral of the story is found in verse 14,

¹⁴ For many are called, but few are chosen.

In other words, the Jews were called, and the street people were called, but in the end, few were “chosen.” The chosen ones are the remnant of grace, Paul says in [Rom. 11:5–7](#). The rest are “blinded” (KJV) or “hardened” (NASB).

Jerusalem is a Desolate House

In Matthew 23 Jesus gave a series of “woes” about how Jerusalem had “*murdered the prophets*” (23:31). Knowing that He was about to be crucified, he then said in verse 32, “*Fill up then the measure of the guilt of your fathers.*”

[Matt. 23:35](#) says that Jerusalem would be held liable for “*all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah.*” He ends with verses 38 and 39,

³⁸ Behold, your house is being left to you desolate! ³⁹ For I say to you, from now on you shall not see Me until you say, “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!”

The desolation of Jerusalem first occurred when the city was destroyed by Babylon in 586 B.C. It was again desolated in 70 A.D. The third major desolation has yet to take place. We know this, because Jeremiah prophesied that the city would be destroyed so completely that it would not be repaired or rebuilt again ([Jer. 19:10, 11](#)). He illustrated this by smashing a jar in the valley of Ben-hinnom (or *gehenna* in Greek).

The Old Jerusalem will not be spared at the last minute, as so many have claimed. Paul says that the earthly Jerusalem is “Hagar” ([Gal. 4:25](#)) and represents the Old Covenant (4:24). Jerusalem and her children (Jews) will not be inheritors of the Kingdom but are to be “*cast out*” (4:30) in favor of the children of the New Covenant—that is, Sarah, or the New Jerusalem (4:26, 28, 31).

Christ will come somewhere around the time of Jerusalem’s destruction—whether before or after, I do not know. When Christ comes, “*every eye will see Him,*” and all of the tribes of the earth will mourn—some more than others. The Jews will mourn because they were tricked by their religious leaders. They will also mourn because they will see that the Kingdom of God was taken from them. They will mourn because their desire to rule the world as “chosen ones” will elude them. Only the remnant of grace will rule and reign with Christ.

Repentance at that late hour will not change the previous verdicts that Jesus rendered just before He was crucified. It will not change Jeremiah’s prophecy of the utter destruction of Jerusalem. Instead, repentance will give Jews (and all other people) opportunity to become citizens of the New Jerusalem, whereby they may be blessed equally along with all of its citizens.

Chapter 8: The Lord's Day

[Revelation 1:8](#) says,

⁸ “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

If we consider this to be a Greek way of expressing Hebrew thought, we can exchange the Greek letters of the alphabet (*alpha* and *omega*) with the Hebrew letters, *alef* and *tav*. Both are meant to express the idea that God is the beginning and end—or, as we see plainly, “*who is and who was and who is to come*.”

However, these are three positions, not two. “*Who was*” corresponds to the *alpha* or *alef*. “*Who is to come*” corresponds to the *omega* or *tav*. But what about “*who is*”?

The Hebrew word for Truth is *amet*, which is spelled *alef-mem-tav* (???). It is the first, middle, and last letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Truth knows the beginning, the end, and everything in the middle. It knows the origin (cause), the end (result), and all of the “water” (*mem*) connecting the two.

When Jesus said, “*I am the way, the truth, and the life*” ([John 14:6](#)), He was saying that Truth was a Person—Himself. He claimed to be the Creator of all at the beginning, the Sustainer of all in history, and the Receiver of all at the end of time.

Paul put it this way in [Rom. 11:36](#): “*For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things.*”

John also calls Him in [Rev. 1:8](#), “*the Lord God.*” This is the Septuagint way of translating *Yahweh Elohim* ([Gen. 2:4](#), [5](#), [7](#), [8](#), [9](#), etc.), using the Greek phrase, *kurios ho theos*.

John uses a final term, *Pantokrator*, “the Almighty.” The term is derived from *pas*, “all,” and *krator*, “power, strength, might.” *Pantokrator* is the Septuagint Greek term used most often in Job and Jeremiah. [Jer. 5:14](#) reads, “*Therefore, thus says the Lord, the God of hosts*” (NASB). The Septuagint translates it *kurios ho theos*, “the Lord our God.” In other words, “the Lord God” in [Rev. 1:8](#) seems to be the equivalent of “The Almighty.”

John's Context in Writing the Book

John has three introductions in the first chapter of Revelation. The first is [Rev. 1:1–3](#). The second is [Rev. 1:4–8](#). The third begins in [Rev. 1:9](#),

⁹ I, John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance which are in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos, because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

John was on Patmos when he received this message to the seven churches (vs. 11). Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons (120–202 A.D.), tells us that John was exiled to Patmos toward the end of the reign of Domitian, who ruled Rome from 81–96 A.D. (*Against Heresies*, V, xxx, 3). Early church writers, such as Irenaeus, Eusebius, and Jerome tell us that John was banished to Patmos in the fourteenth year of Domitian (95 A.D.).

John, who lived in Ephesus and oversaw the churches in Asia, was about 90 years old when he was arrested and brought in chains to Rome to be judged by Domitian. His arrest probably came in the year 93 A.D. Domitian had taken upon himself the title *censor perpetuus*, “Perpetual Censor,” giving him the right to determine the moral code for the empire. In 93 A.D. near the height of his madness, he added to himself the title of *dominus et deus*, “lord and god.”

It was during this time that John was arrested and sentenced to death for refusing to bow to the emperor as “lord and god.” According to Tertullian, the Roman lawyer who lived a century later, John was sentenced to be boiled in oil. Tertullian writes,

“How happy is its church, on which apostles poured forth all their doctrines along with their blood! Where Peter endures a passion like his Lord’s! Where Paul wins his crown in a death like John’s! Where the Apostle John was first plunged, unhurt, into boiling oil, and thence remitted to his island-exile!” (On Prescription against Heretics, XXXVI)

Other writers took note of this miraculous escape as well, and it explains why John was exiled, rather than executed in Rome.

Patmos was the Alcatraz of the first century, a rugged island located 24 miles off the coast of modern Turkey. On one side of the island lived the hardened criminals, and the other side were the political prisoners (such as John). The political prisoners were treated with greater respect and allowed to roam the island freely.

Even so, all prisoners had to survive on their own, growing their own food and building their own shelters. Early church writings tell us that John was accompanied by Prochorus, one of his disciples, to assist him. Prochorus was one of the original deacons ([Acts 6:5](#)).

After Domitian was murdered in 96 A.D., his successor, Nerva, granted amnesty to many of Domitian’s victims of injustice. John and Prochorus were among them, and they returned to Ephesus in 96 A.D. Meanwhile, Nerva ruled Rome for two years (96–98), and then his adopted son, Trajan, succeeded him and ruled from 98–117.

John “remained among them up to the times of Trajan” (*Against Heresies*, II, xxii, 5). Hence, John probably died about the year 99 or 100 A.D. His book, however, was written during his exile on Patmos, that is, between 93 and 96 A.D.

The Day of the Lord

John apparently received the command to write the book of Revelation while he was on Patmos. [Rev. 1:10](#), [11](#) says,

¹⁰ I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet, ¹¹ saying, “Write in a book what you see, and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.”

There are differing opinions on the meaning of “the Lord’s day.” Some argue that it is the equivalent of [Isaiah 13:6](#) and [2](#),

⁶ Wail, for the day of the Lord is near! It will come as destruction from the Almighty.

⁹ Behold, the day of the Lord is coming, cruel, with fury and burning anger, to make the land a desolation, and He will exterminate its sinners from it.

[Joel 1:15](#) echoes the same dire warning:

¹⁵ Alas for the day! For the day of the Lord is near, and it will come as destruction from the Almighty.

The same terminology is used of the Sabbath day in [Isaiah 58:13](#),

¹³ If because of the Sabbath, you turn your foot from doing your own pleasure on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy day of the Lord honorable, and shall honor it, desisting from your own ways, from seeking your own pleasure, and speaking your own word ...

The question is how John was using the term in [Rev. 1:10](#). Was John really caught up in the Spirit to a position in the future where he saw the *destructive* events at the end of the age? Or was John “in the Spirit” in the sense of being moved and inspired by the Holy Spirit in hearing a particular message on a day commonly called “The Lord’s day”?

John does not explain himself, and the details he gives are insufficient to lay claim to his meaning. Either view above has Hebrew roots, so we cannot claim that evidence to prove either way. It really comes down to seeing this term in the context of what John was writing at the time. He received this revelatory message to the seven churches on the Lord’s day. The actual message is recorded in Revelation 2, 3.

This message has nothing to do with the “day of the Lord” in which we see “destruction” ([Isaiah 13:6](#)). It has nothing to do with the desolation of the land ([Isaiah 13:9](#)). It has nothing to do with the nations being gathered for judgment in “the valley of decision” ([Joel 3:14](#)). There is no darkness and gloom as we see in [Amos 5:20](#). In other words, none of the destructive characteristics of the “day of the Lord” are seen in the message to the seven churches. It is only if we include the destruction in the latter chapters of the book that we may possibly identify the “day of the Lord” with such divine judgment on the earth.

It seems more likely that “the Lord’s day” is to be associated with the Sabbath in [Isaiah 58:13](#). More specifically, it is the true Sabbath, which (Isaiah says) is about doing only what we see our Father do and speaking what we hear our Father say. It is about not doing our own works, but God’s works only. This is *God’s rest*.

[Heb. 4:9](#), [10](#) comments on [Isaiah 58:13](#) by saying,

⁹ There remains therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God. ¹⁰ For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His.

Furthermore, the New Testament speaks of “the day of the Lord” differently from “the Lord’s day.” Paul writes often of “the day of the Lord” ([1 Cor. 5:5](#); [1 Thess. 5:2](#); [2 Thess. 2:2](#)). Luke speaks of it in [Acts 2:20](#). Peter mentions it in [2 Peter 3:10](#). In every case, it is a reference to the same “day of the Lord” (*hemera tou Kurion*) as found in Isaiah, Joel, and the other prophets. In every case the New Testament authors set forth the destruction and judgment of the nations as we see in the Old Testament prophecies.

But when John mentions “the Lord’s day,” the word order is different, and the message is completely different. It is not a warning to the nations, but a report card to the seven churches.

The Emperor’s Day: *Kuriakos*

Rick Renner tells us that *kuriakos* was the term used to describe Emperor’s Day in the Roman Empire. In his book, [A Light in Darkness, Seven Messages to the Seven Churches](#), Vol. 1, p. 41, he writes,

“The phrase ‘the Lord’s day’ is a translation of the Greek word kuriakos, a specific word that was used primarily to describe the Emperor’s Day. It has been proven from ancient inscriptions that the word kuriakos was a common word for anything imperial and that the first day of each month was designated as an imperial day when the ruling emperor was especially celebrated. That day was referred to as kuriakos or the Emperor’s Day.

“This means Jesus Christ chose to reveal Himself [to John, the exile at Patmos] as the King of kings and Lord of lords on the very day that the entire Roman Empire was specially celebrating the supposed deity of the wicked Emperor Domitian. It must have struck John that on the same day when the whole world was worshipping a fraudulent, evil human ruler, the True Ruler stepped into the forsaken place where John was exiled and revealed Himself in all of His glory to him.”

Renner says that the revelation of John was given on the Emperor’s Day, which was the first day of each of the Roman months. There is one chance in seven that this also fell on a Sunday. We cannot say for sure, but Renner makes it clear

that “the Lord’s day” was a term that the Christians preempted for their own use and application. In other words, the early Church did not use the term to honor the deified Roman emperor but to honor Jesus Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords ([Rev. 19:16](#)).

Church Usage of the Term

Within a generation of John’s publication of the book of Revelation, the churches were using his terminology, applying “the Lord’s day” to their new Sabbath, that is, Sunday, or “the first day of the week.”

Ignatius of Antioch, for example, who served under John’s ministry for decades and outlived John by only about ten years, wrote a letter to the Magnesians, saying,

“Let us therefore no longer keep the Sabbath after the Jewish manner, and rejoice in days of idleness... But let every one of you keep the Sabbath after a spiritual manner, rejoicing in meditation on the law And after the observance of the Sabbath, let every friend of Christ keep the Lord’s Day as a festival, the resurrection-day, the queen and chief of all the days [of the week].” (Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 1, pp. 62, 63)

In another letter Ignatius writes to the Trallians,

“On the day of the preparation, then, at the third hour, He received the sentence of death from Pilate, the Father permitting that to happen; at the sixth hour He was crucified; at the ninth hour He gave up the ghost; and before sunset He was buried. During the Sabbath He continued under the earth in the tomb in which Joseph of Arimathea had laid Him. At the dawning of the Lord’s Day He arose from the dead, according to what was spoken by Himself... The day of the preparation, then, comprises the passion; the Sabbath embraces the burial; the Lord’s Day contains the resurrection.” (Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 1, p. 70)

He identifies “the Lord’s Day” as the day of Christ’s resurrection. It is not known precisely when he wrote these letter, but they were written long before he approached his martyrdom in 113 A.D. It is quite likely that he wrote them while John (his mentor) was yet alive—that is, before 100 A.D. Hence, it is very unlikely that his definition of “the Lord’s Day” would differ from the teachings of John, the apostle to whom he, as a bishop, was submitted.

Ignatius was a child of about three years of age when he was one of the 500 witnesses of Christ’s resurrection. He knew John personally for many decades, for he and Polycarp were disciples of John. It is highly unlikely, then, that Ignatius would have defined “the Lord’s day” in a way that John would have disapproved.

My conclusion, then, is that “the day of the Lord” is not the same as “the Lord’s day.” The phrases are similar, but their usage is totally different. The Old Testament’s “day of the Lord” knew nothing of the Roman Emperor, but treated the phrase as a warning of impending judgment. The New Testament and the early church used “the Lord’s day” to honor the first day of the week on which day the Lord Jesus (the Christian King/Emperor) was raised from the dead.

Early Church Gatherings on Sunday

In [Acts 20:7](#) Paul gathered to “break bread” with the believers “on the first day of the week.” It suggests that this was the normal day on which they partook of communion. In [1 Cor. 16:2](#) Paul told the church to set aside contributions on the first day of the week. Some argue that this means nothing, but it does support the idea that believers met on that day and that offerings were collected as well. At any rate, Paul never mentions the second or third day of the week.

The *Didache*, or “Teachings” (of the Apostles), is dated as early as 65 A.D., but some place it at the end of the first century or early second century. It is one of the earliest church documents outside of the New Testament itself. In chapter 14 it reads,

“On the Lord’s day of the Lord, gather together and break bread and give thanks, adding confession to your sins, that your sacrifice may be pure.”

This seems to imply that what the common culture called the “day of the Lord” (their “Sunday” or “Day of the Sun”) was being preempted by the Christians in their own Sunday gatherings. Hence, it is no longer the Roman’s “day of the Lord,” but rather our own Lord’s “day of the Lord.” In other words, the Romans and the Christians called the same day the “day of the Lord,” but for very different reasons. The Romans honored the Sun, while the Christians honored Jesus Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, who had arisen with healing in His wings ([Mal. 4:2](#)).

We know from *The Didache*, quoted earlier, that “the Lord’s day of the Lord” was a term used over two decades before John spoke of “the Lord’s day” in [Rev. 1:10](#). We also know that the early Church did not use the term to honor the emperor but to honor Jesus Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords.

By the middle of the second century, Justin Martyr wrote about church practice as if it was normal for the church to meet on Sunday:

“And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits.” (Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 1, p. 186)

Again, he informs us of the common practice in his time, saying,

“But Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world; and Jesus Christ our Saviour on the same day rose from the dead. For He was crucified on the day before that of Saturn [Saturday]; and on the day after that of Saturn, which is the day of the Sun, having appeared to His apostles and disciples, He taught them these things, which have submitted to you also for your consideration.” (Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 1, p. 186)

One may argue, of course, that Ignatius, Justin, and all the other church leaders who wrote during this time period were wrong in their view about meeting on Sunday. Some even present their writings as evidence of apostasy or idolatry. However, to malign their writings would also undermine John Himself, for Ignatius wrote under his tutelage. There was no evidence that John made any attempt to correct his view or to change the common practice of meeting on Sunday.

It does not seem likely that Ignatius would be wrong, since he was a long-time disciple of John. Neither does John chide any of the seven churches for meeting on Sunday, but tells us that he was in the Spirit “on the Lord’s day.” He used the term that was commonly being used in his day regarding Sunday, or the first day of the week.

There are many such references in the writings of the early church, and there are no writings which denounce their practice. Hence, when the Roman Church claims to have changed the day from Saturday to Sunday, they do not mean that a fourth-century pope made the change. They mean that the apostles changed the day—claiming, of course, that Peter was their first Pope. This is only a half-truth, as we know, for there is no evidence that Peter himself decided on his own to adopt Sunday as a day of worship or that he told the other apostles what to do. In fact, it is John who speaks of “the Lord’s day,” not Peter.

Further, Peter’s ministry to “the circumcised,” along with his tendency to appease the Jewish Christians ([Gal. 2:11](#)) makes it very *unlikely* that Peter was responsible for instituting this change.

Others claim that the Roman Emperor Constantine changed the day with an edict that was issued on March 7, 321 A.D. However, his edict changed nothing. It only *legalized* the day on which the church had been meeting for centuries. His decree read:

“All judges, the inhabitants of cities and those concerned in the occupations of all trades shall rest on the honorable day of the sun. Peasants, however, shall be free and unhindered in the cultivation of the field, because it often happens that no other day is so fit for sowing corn or planting vines, lest the critical moment being let slip, men should lose the commodities granted them by the providence of heaven.”

Constantine’s bodyguards revered him, says Eusebius, not because he honored the pagan “day of the sun,” but because he allowed his Christian soldiers to honor the day by going to a Christian church on Sunday.

Actually, a Synod of Elvira, in Spain, was held in 306 during the Diocletian persecution, to pass an ecclesiastical ruling that defined the duration of time within which a Christian must appear at church on Sunday. It threatened Christians with excommunication for those who skipped church three times in a row. This ruling was later expanded and adopted into Roman law by Justinian in the sixth century, when civil laws threatened legal penalties for not attending church. Canon law then forbade farm labor, court sessions and public assemblies, hunting, marketing, and also restricted travel on Sundays.

Hence, Constantine’s edict in 321 A.D. set little or no precedent for later canon law.

So the claim that Constantine forced the Christians—or anyone else—to worship on Sunday is without foundation. There are plenty of early church writings—as early as the time of the apostle John (in the case of Ignatius)—to show that they met on Sunday, which they called “the Lord’s day.”

Chapter 9: The Son of Man

The voice that John heard on the Lord's day told him to write a book to the seven churches, telling them what he saw. However, before John began to record this message, he observed his surroundings and turned to see who was speaking to him.

The Voice from the Temple

[Revelation 1:12, 13](#) says,

¹² And I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands. ¹³ and in the middle of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His breast with a golden girdle.

This, then, was a vision of the temple in heaven with the voice of God speaking out of the temple—the heavenly sanctuary. Of this we read in [Heb. 9:11](#),

¹¹ But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation.

The risen, glorified Christ was not speaking from the Most Holy Place as one might expect, but from the midst of the lampstands in the Holy Place. Obviously, these seven lampstands were meant to represent the seven churches. John speaks of the lampstands seven times in the book of Revelation ([Rev. 1:12, 13, 20](#) (twice); [Rev. 2:1, 5; 11:4](#)), as if to emphasize the seven churches.

Since the Spirit had been given to the church on the day of Pentecost, we find Christ positioned in the midst of the church. The church, then, is seen fulfilling the role of the priesthood, for only priests were allowed to enter the Holy Place. It suggests that all true believers are supposed to *be* priests, not merely to *have* priests over them.

Christ is described as appearing in the form “*like a son of man*,” that is, in human form, clothed as the great High Priest of the Order of Melchizedek. Of course, the term, “son of man,” had great prophetic significance, as this is the term used to describe the One coming to the Ancient of Days in [Dan. 7:13](#) to receive dominion over the earth. He could rule in heaven as the Son of God, but because man was given dominion over the earth in [Gen. 1:26–28](#), He had to become a son of man in order to rule the earth. He had to be the last Adam, fully in the image and likeness of God, a perfect image and reflection of the Father, to receive the right of dominion.

[Hebrews 8:1, 2](#) says,

¹ Now the main point in what has been said is this: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, ² a minister in the sanctuary, and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man.

John himself (through his mother) was from a family of priests, as I explained in [Dr. Luke: Healing the Breaches, Book 8, chapter 9](#). Hence, Caiaphas knew John personally ([John 18:15](#)), and at Jesus' trial, John was able to talk to the doorkeeper in order to allow Peter access to the courtyard where the trial was being held. Toward the end of the second century, Polycrates wrote,

“Again there is John, who leant back on the Lord's breast, and who became a priest wearing a mitre [petalon], a martyr and a teacher; he too sleeps in Ephesus.” [quoted by Eusebius in Eccl. Hist., III, 31]

John's connection to the Aaronic priests seems to have given him a priestly persona even in the church at Ephesus and perhaps all of the churches in Asia.

The Robe and Sash

The robe of Aaron, the first high priest of the old order, was blue ([Exodus 28:31](#)). John does not tell us the color of Christ's robe in the tabernacle of heaven, but we may presume that it too was blue, representing the law, heaven, and the realm of spirit. Recall that Paul said in [Rom. 7:14](#), "*the law is spiritual.*" Hence, it is represented by the "*cord of blue*" ([Num. 15:38](#)), which was to remind people of "*all the commandments of the Lord*" ([Num. 15:39](#)). The high priest was to be the embodiment of the complete and exact intent of the law of God.

Aaron's sash was described in [Exodus 39:29](#),

²⁹ and the sash of fine twisted linen, and blue and purple and scarlet material, the work of the weaver, just as the Lord had commanded Moses [in [Exodus 28:39](#)].

The sash (belt, girdle) was multicolored, having linen ("righteous acts of saints," [Rev. 19:8](#)), blue (spiritual law), purple (dominion), and scarlet (redemption). Unusual emphasis is placed upon the fact that it had to be done by a "weaver" in order to integrate all of the colors and unite them as one.

Nonetheless, in [Rev. 1:13](#) we find Christ "*girded across His breast with a golden girdle.*" Gold represents the divine nature. In the construction of the Ark of the Covenant, which was made of wood overlaid with gold, the prophetic picture is of human nature overlaid with the divine nature. It was a picture of Christ as Son of Man and Son of God.

The old high priest wore a woven sash having many colors, but Christ wears a golden sash. His divine nature trumps all of the other colors, for it was because of His divine nature—given through the virgin birth—that the purpose and prophecies of the other colors found their fulfillment.

The White Hair

[Revelation 1:14](#) says,

¹⁴ And His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire.

Christ is here described in terms similar to the Ancient of Days in [Dan. 7:9](#), "*His vesture was like white snow, and the hair of His head like pure wool.*" The physical description has spiritual meaning and purpose, for the law says in [Lev. 19:32](#),

³² You shall rise up before the grayheaded [*Seybah*, hoary, old age], and honor the aged, and you shall revere your God; I am the Lord.

This law prophesied that men will rise from the dead when the Ancient of Days comes. So in Daniel 7 we see the dead rising to stand before the Ancient of Days at the final judgment. [Dan. 7:13](#) tells us that the Son of Man "*came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him.*" He tells us also that the Ancient of Days had white hair, but he gives no physical description of the Son of Man.

It remains for John to tell us that the Son of Man also had white hair. The same respect that was accorded to the Ancient of Days is thus paid also to the Son of Man. It also identifies Christ as the Judge of the earth, as Jesus said in [John 5:26](#), [27](#),

²⁶ For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself, ²⁷ and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man.

Jesus then spoke of the resurrection in [John 5:28](#), [29](#),

²⁸ Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, ²⁹ and shall come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.

It is also important to note that the resurrection, rising up before the One with white hair, was not a request or a suggestion. Under the Old Covenant, the commandments are mere commands to be obeyed by the will of man. Under the New Covenant, God exercises His sovereign right as Creator. Hence, the laws are prophecies and promises that are performed or enforced by the will of God alone.

Hence, the Old Covenant demands that men rise at the presence of an old man—and men may or may not obey. However, the New Covenant does not place the decision in the hands of men, but only in the hands of God. For this reason, when the dead are raised, it is not by their choice. They are summoned, arrested, and brought forcibly to the Great White Throne for judgment.

More than this, the law says they were to “*honor the aged, and you shall revere your God.*” While this was a command under the Old Covenant, which men might obey or disobey, it was a statement of fact (a promise) under the New Covenant. In other words, this law tells us not what men *may* do, but what all men WILL DO at the Great White Throne judgment. This is consistent with [Isaiah 45:23](#), [24](#),

²³ I have sworn by Myself, the word has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness and will not turn back, that to Me every knee will bow, every tongue will swear allegiance. ²⁴ They will say of Me, “Only in the Lord are righteousness and strength...”

We see, then, that at the Great White Throne, all men, including those who had lived and died in unbelief, will “*swear allegiance*” to Christ and will “*honor*” and “*revere*” Him as the law says. Of course, they must still undergo the discipline of the baptism of fire in order to grow to spiritual maturity. Yet in the end, at the Creation Jubilee, they will all come fully into their inheritance in Christ when God becomes “*all in all*” ([1 Cor. 15:28](#)).

Eyes Like a Flame of Fire

At the end of [Rev. 1:14](#), John says of the Speaker that “*His eyes were like a flame of fire.*” This is repeated at the end of the book in [Rev. 19:12](#), where we see the glorified Christ again described in such a manner. The windows of the soul allow us to peek into His very being. [Deut. 4:24](#) says,

²⁴ For the Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.

As we will see shortly in [Rev. 1:16](#), “*out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword.*” Hebrew idiom likens the tongue (and the word) to a sword. In fact, the Hebrew word *labbah* means both a flame and the tip (point) of a weapon, such as a sword or spear.

[Heb. 1:7](#) says also that God “*makes His angels winds, and His ministers a flame of fire.*” The word of God is in His angels, and is reflected in the name of the angel. Hence, an angel is pictured as a flame, or tip of the sword, which is the word of God that comes out of the mouth of Christ.

Seven Eyes

The eyes of Christ are mentioned in [Zech. 4:10](#), “*the eyes of the Lord which range to and fro throughout the earth.*” This comes in the context of the “stone” set before Joshua (Yeshua) in [Zech. 3:9](#). On this stone are “seven eyes,” which also appear to be the same as the seven lamps on the lampstand in the temple ([Zech. 4:2](#)).

It is complex, but it is likely that this “stone” is the same as the Stone Kingdom arising in [Daniel 2:35](#), which is destined to fill the whole earth. If the seven lampstands represent the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3, then it is apparent that the church is supposed to have the seven lights (“eyes”) to carry out its responsibility under God. The

church fell far short, of course, but the overcomers within the church have not failed. By being in agreement with Christ and the divine plan, the overcomers see the world through His eyes. As they absorb the angels that determine their callings, they become the living word by manifesting in their lives the word that is in their angels.

The eyes of the glorified Christ, then, are a flame of fire, depicting the angels who are sent forth from Him into the earth with the word of God. Those angels become the eyes of God in the earth. Seven are assigned specifically to the seven churches, whose overcomers become the living word, thus bringing heaven to earth. Being in Christ, they are the Stone Kingdom cut out of the mountain without hands, which eventually fills the whole earth.

The Hebrew concept of *eyes* is based, in part, on the sixteenth letter of their alphabet, *ayin*, which was originally written in the shape of an eye. The *ayin* carries a numeric value of 70. Seven eyes picture 7 x 70, or 490, which is a highly charged prophetic number seen in the revelation of Daniel's seventy weeks. When applied to time cycles, the seven eyes (7 x 70) is the same as ten Jubilee cycles (49 x 10).

For this reason, it seems that one of the purposes of the seven eyes in roaming the earth is to oversee the divine plan and to ensure that events occur at the appointed times according to the will of God. We must also keep in mind the fact that the *ayin* is the sixteenth letter of the Hebrew alphabet, because sixteen is the biblical number of Love. Love forms the background for the entire plan and will of God, and all judgment proceeds out of His heart of Love. This is why divine judgment, while often severe, is corrective in the end and is designed for the ultimate good of the sinner.

His Bronze Feet

[Revelation 1:15](#) continues,

¹⁵ and His feet were like burning bronze, when it has been caused to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters.

David wrote in [Psalm 8:6](#), “*Thou hast put all things under his feet.*” He wrote this psalm after killing Goliath. This is quoted in the New Testament, applying it to Christ in [Heb. 2:8](#), [1 Cor. 15:27](#), and [Eph. 1:22](#). It is plain that Christ subdues His enemies (portrayed by Goliath) through judgment. This is why His feet are pictured as molten bronze, for bronze is the metal of divine judgment in Scripture. The brazen altar in the courtyard of the tabernacle and temple is the place where sin is judged by sacrifice.

At the same time, we must balance this with the fact that God also subdues His enemies by the power of love, which is demonstrated by His willingness to die for His enemies ([Rom. 5:6–10](#)). Therefore, all the animals that were types and shadows of Christ were offered to God to pay for the sins of the people. It pictures divine judgment as fiery bronze that is motivated by love, which is His nature. In other words, divine judgment was not designed to destroy permanently, but to put all things under His feet, so that God can be “*all in all*” ([1 Cor. 15:28](#)).

Under the Old Covenant, which Paul calls “*the ministry of death*” in [2 Cor. 3:7](#), men died by the physical sword. By the physical sword also was Canaan conquered. But under the New Covenant, which is “*the ministry of the Spirit*” ([2 Cor. 3:8](#)), believers have been given “*the sword of the Spirit*” ([Eph. 6:17](#)). This weapon is “*sharper than any two-edged sword*” ([Heb. 4:12](#)). This spiritual sword is the word of God itself, which has the power to divide soul and spirit and to “*judge [cut apart, separate] the thoughts and intentions of the heart.*”

It is important to understand that the judgments of God under the New Covenant are *not* administered to destroy the bulk of mankind, but to find a way to include them in the Kingdom of God. They are to be put under the feet of Christ—that is, under His authority. He accomplished this by His death on the cross, pictured in the sacrifices on the brazen altar. Although the sin of the world was massive, His life and blood was worth far more than all the debt of mankind throughout history. So He had the means to pay the penalty Himself for the sin of the world, and He loved His creation enough to pay with His life.

The Seven Stars

[Revelation 1:16](#) ends John's description of the One speaking:

¹⁶ And in His right hand He held seven stars; and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength.

The explanation for the seven stars is given later in verse 20: “*the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches.*” The seven stars are the Pleiades, pictured in the heavens as the Seven Sisters, who are also the seven churches in the book of Revelation.

In Prof. E. Raymond Capt's book, The Glory of the Stars, he writes on page 101,

“In the neck of Taurus is another cluster of stars called the ‘Pleiades’ (the Seven Sisters). The word means ‘the congregation of the judges’ or ‘rulers’. The brightest star in this group is ‘Al Cyone’ (Arabic), which means ‘the center’. Some leading astronomers believe it is the center of the universe. Apparently that is what was implied when Job is asked of God, ‘Canst thou bind the sweet influences of the Pleiades?’ ([Job 38:31](#)).”

Identifying the Seven Churches with the Pleiades, as John does, shows us that the Church is called as “the congregation of the judges,” that is, a jury. The Church is the “congregation,” rather than an organizational structure. The Old Testament word *kahal*, is translated in the New Testament Greek as *ecclesia* ([Heb. 2:12](#)) which is translated into English as “Church.” The Church in the wilderness under Moses ([Acts 7:38](#)) was not the organization or the tabernacle; it was the congregation. The Church is *the congregation* that goes to the building, *not the building* where the people gather.

The Pleiades are thought by some astronomers to be located at the center of the universe. The Pleiades were also thought to be the throne of God. It is interesting, then, that the Church—that is, the congregation—is called to rule in His throne, which is the center of all things. [Rev. 2:1](#) says the Seven Stars are “*in His right hand*,” even as Paul says in [Eph. 1:20](#) that Christ was raised up to sit at the right hand of the Father.

The “right hand” signifies power, authority, rulership. In this case, it has a dual meaning. First, Christ has power over the Seven Churches, for He is the Head and has pre-eminence over all. Second, the Church itself is given authority in view of their position in Him and under Him. Their authority is simply an extension of Christ's own power.

His Face

In his description, John saved the best for last. “*His face was like the sun shining in its strength*” ([Rev. 1:16](#)).

The face of Christ is said to be shining like the noon day sun. Here John sees Christ fully unveiled, manifesting the glory of the Father as seen by the three disciples in His transfiguration on the mount. That story is found in [Matt. 17:2](#), where it says,

² And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as the light.

This manifestation was in turn a New Testament parallel to the transfiguration of Moses when he too was “in the mount.” We read of that in Exodus 34.

The Transfiguration of Moses

Moses went up the mount, where, on his sixth ascent, God gave him the Ten Commandments in stone. While there, however, the people had built a golden calf to worship. When Moses returned after forty days and saw what the people had done, he broke the tablets of the law ([Exodus 32:19](#)).

He then ascended on his seventh trip to intercede for the people ([Exodus 32:21](#)). God told him that He would no longer lead Israel personally but that an angel would lead them. Afterward, Moses made his eighth and final ascent into the mount, as recorded in [Exodus 34:4](#). God then made another covenant with Moses and Israel in verse 10,

¹⁰ Then God said, Behold, I am going to make a covenant. Before all your people I will perform miracles, which have not been produced in all the earth, nor among any of the nations; and all the people among whom you live will see the working of the Lord, for it is a fearful thing that I am going to perform with you.

This covenant was foreshadowed in the light that shone from the face of Moses when he returned from the mount with the new tables of the law. Moses' transfiguration was the beginning of this covenant of miracles. This, I believe, provided the basis for the celebration of Israel's final feast, the Feast of Tabernacles—specifically the eighth day of Tabernacles. It is the day of receiving the fullness of the Spirit and the glorified body.

Moses was the first to set the pattern, commemorating it as a feast day. Later, the same pattern was repeated in Christ, for He was the prophet like Moses ([Deut. 18:18](#); [Acts 3:22](#)). The final fulfillment will be seen in the body of Christ on the eighth day of the Feast of Tabernacles in some year.

Neither Moses' nor Christ's transfigurations are specifically dated, for God has hidden much of His plan in types and shadows. We know from the story in Exodus that this occurred some time in the autumn of the year. But the fact that Moses was returning from his eighth trip up the mount gives us our first clue. Secondly, he was carrying the second law, the first having been broken, which is a picture of the New Covenant, by which the law will be kept ([Heb. 8:8–12](#)).

It was, by the way, the same law ([Exodus 34:1](#)) that God had given Moses in the first tablets. The only difference was that the second law was not broken, for it is an abiding covenant, based upon what God will fulfill in us, not how well man can fulfill it for God.

The difference between these two transfigurations is that Moses found it necessary to veil his face, while Christ appeared to John unveiled in His full glory "*like the sun*." Paul explains in [2 Cor. 3:14](#) that the Old Covenant is the veil. This veil, he says, is removed in Christ ([2 Cor. 3:16](#)). When it is removed, then [Psalm 80:3, 7, 19](#) will be fulfilled: "*Cause Thy face to shine upon us, and we will be saved.*"

So also we must understand the feet of the unveiled Christ as part of a New Covenant manifestation of Christ. The New Covenant is based on the promises of God, whereas the Old Covenant is based on the promises of man. The promises of man cannot be kept perfectly, and so it leads to death. Only the promises of God will be kept fully, and when Christ comes as the Mediator of the New Covenant, it is certain that those promises will be kept. In other words, all things will be put under His feet.

Chapter 10: The Mystery of the Lampstand

When the voice spoke to John, he turned to see who was speaking and immediately collapsed to the ground as if dead. Yet his split-second vision of the glorified Son of Man was etched in his memory, so that he was able to recall it when he began to write the book of Revelation. [Rev. 1:17](#) says,

¹⁷ And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as a dead man. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying, “Do not be afraid ...”

Seeing the glory of the presence of God up close is more than our flesh can stand. It was the same with the House of Israel, when God came down as fire and spoke to them, for we read in [Deut. 4:33](#),

³³ Has any people heard the voice of God speaking from the midst of the fire, as you have heard it, and survived?

Later, an angel appeared in glory to Daniel, who immediately fell into a deep sleep. We read in [Daniel 10:7–9](#),

⁷ Now I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, while the men who were with me did not see the vision; nevertheless, a great dread fell on them, and they ran away to hide themselves ... ⁹ I fell into a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground.

We see, then, how sinful men cannot stand in the presence of God when they see His glory. Even Ezekiel, when the Spirit transported him to the river Chebar where the Israelites had been deported to Assyria, remained totally undone for an entire week ([Ezekiel 3:15 KJV](#)). So when John experienced God’s glory on Patmos, he too fell down as if dead.

Hearing His Voice and Surviving

What is this death experience? I believe it is what Paul calls the death of the flesh. It does not actually kill a person, but it shifts their conscious awareness from the soul to the spirit. The soul perceives that it is dying and is afraid, for ever since the fall of man the soul has enjoyed the dominant position. The entrance of sin shifted the “I” from the spirit to the soul, and man began to be ruled by his natural (soulish) mind, rather than by the mind of his spirit.

Paul discusses the struggle for dominion between the two I’s in Romans 7. The soulish “I” is subject to the law of sin and death, whereas the spiritual “I” concurs with the law of God ([Rom. 7:22, 23, 25](#)). When we succeed in following the leading of our spirit-man, which in turn is led and empowered by the Holy Spirit, it is as if the soul has died, or has fallen into a deep sleep.

All believers ought to live by the spirit, because it concurs (is in agreement) with the law of God. The spirit does not need to be subjected to the law, for it does not resist the law. Only the old man (soul) resists the law, for it is a “*prisoner of the law of sin*” ([Rom. 7:23](#)). The soulish “I” cannot help but sin, Paul says, because it is a slave to sin. Paul says again in [Rom. 8:6–8](#),

⁶ For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, ⁷ because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so; ⁸ and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

It is amazing, in light of Paul’s clear statement, how many “Spirit-filled believers” cast aside the law of God and give themselves the right to violate whatever law they do not understand. This is the mindset of the old man, not the new “I” that they claim to follow. Perhaps they mistake the soul for the spirit, believing that they are called to reform the soul, rather than to be led by the spirit.

At any rate, believers are given contact with God through their spirit. Hearing God's voice is done through one's spirit, not through one's soul—although the soul may certainly be aware of what the spirit is hearing. In fact, I believe that this is the root of fear, dread, and even death that comes with seeing God or hearing His voice. It is the old man, the soulish "I" of the flesh that collapses in the presence of God. When that happens, the New Creation Man, the spiritual "I" awakens to take the reins in the person's life.

Men have always feared to hear God's voice. The Israelites were not unique in this fear reaction when God spoke to them on the Mount ([Exodus 20:19](#)). Hearing God's voice always kills some part of the flesh, for it requires the old "I" to stand aside (or sleep) and to allow the new "I" to take dominion.

So when Daniel, Ezekiel, and John came face to face with God or with an angel, it was but an enhanced experience that is familiar (on a small scale) to all believers who have learned to hear His voice.

Why Not Be Afraid?

The Son of Man told John not to be afraid. Why not? The reason is given in [Rev. 1:17, 18](#),

¹⁷ ... I am the first and the last, ¹⁸ and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore [aionas ton aionan, "for the ages of the ages"], and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

As the alpha and omega, God is the primary cause of all things, and He will be there in the end. All things came out of Him, and all things will go back to Him ([Rom. 11:36](#)). When we truly understand this, we will have no need to fear death or to fear being lost forever. He is the source of life, "the living One." Yet He found a way to die without destroying all life in the universe.

Having been given "*the keys of death and of Hades*," He has the power to resurrect at his discretion and to bring them out of Hades. Scripture tells us of His intent and plan to raise all the dead, small and great, at the Great White Throne judgment ([Rev. 20:11, 12](#)). Scripture tells us that God has vowed to work until every knee bows and every tongue swears allegiance to Him ([Isaiah 45:23, 24, 25](#)).

This is the promise, not only to John who fell to the ground as a dead man, but to all the dead, great and small. Their destinies are not in the hands of the devil, nor even in their own hands. Only Jesus holds the keys of death. Although man was given *authority* in the earth in [Gen. 1:26–28](#), he was never given *sovereignty*.

Authority is legitimate, but it is limited. Man is made of the dust of the ground ([Gen. 2:7](#)). He is part of the earth which God created and owns. God lays claim to all the land by right of creation, and therefore man lacks the right to sell his "land" permanently ([Lev. 25:23](#)). He may sell his land (i.e., himself) for a season, but in the end he will always return to his inheritance, which is the glorified body. The earth will show forth the glory of God. Physical matter will be the wick on the candle of God, showing forth His light in the darkness. Man's authority must ultimately give way to God's sovereignty.

The Temple Metaphor

[Revelation 1:19](#) says,

¹⁹ Write therefore the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall take place after these things.

John was told to testify to that which he had already seen, that which he was presently seeing, and that which he will yet see. Obviously, John had walked with Jesus in his early years. Later he had written his gospel to supplement the earlier gospels. Now he was about to write something new.

[Revelation 1:20](#) concludes,

²⁰ As for the mystery [secret symbol] of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lamp-stands; the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

Jesus distinguishes between the “stars” and the “lampstands.” The fires (lights) appear as seven stars (“angels”) being upheld by the seven churches (lampstands). The church carries the light of angels.

The key to this mystery, as with many others, is to understand the relationship between heaven and earth, or between the spiritual and the physical. Moses built the tabernacle according to the “pattern” ([Exodus 25:9](#)) that he saw in heaven while he was on the mount. Later, David had a similar revelation of the “pattern” for Solomon’s temple ([1 Chron. 28:19](#)). The Hebrew word for pattern is *tabniyth*, which means a blueprint or model. In other words, Moses and David built on earth a physical replica, based on the model of a spiritual tabernacle or temple in heaven. Spiritual concepts were expressed in physical forms.

Moses built a tent; Solomon built a temple. This shows a progressive revelation that reflects growth and development in the Kingdom of God. Under the New Covenant, we see a further development, for it is no longer a physical tabernacle, nor a temple in Jerusalem, but the temple that God inhabits in the earth now is made of living stones ([1 Peter 2:5](#)). Paul describes this temple in [Ephesians 2:19–22](#).

This new temple is being built on earth according to a greater pattern of the temple in heaven. Under the Old Covenant, the pattern progressed from tabernacle to temple. It is the same under the New Covenant, where at first we see the tabernacle of David being raised up in [Acts 15:16](#), followed by a new temple. The Age of Pentecost is the time in which this building project is done in a progressive manner.

[Rev. 1:20](#) focuses primarily upon one aspect of this new temple—that of the seven lampstands. The lampstands in heaven are the spiritual pattern (blueprint) for the seven churches on the earth. The earthly churches are imperfect, and for this reason a message was given to them, so that they might conform to the heavenly pattern. They were each called to overcome, but the implication is that only a remnant would do so.

By understanding how God destroyed the temple of Solomon when the nation no longer reflected the glory seen in the temple, we may discern a pattern in the seven churches as well. Pentecost must give way to Tabernacles. Pentecost, while good, is a leavened feast ([Lev. 23:17](#)), and so the overcomers in its midst are relatively few in number.

Likewise, King Saul was a type and shadow of the church under Pentecost, having been crowned on the day of wheat harvest ([1 Sam. 12:17](#)), later called *Pentecost*. Saul was leavened throughout his reign. He persecuted the overcomers (“David”). In the end, he was not allowed to establish an enduring dynasty, but was replaced by David, whose dynasty culminated with the endless reign of Jesus Christ.

So also is it with the seven churches in the Pentecostal Age. The church as we know it must give way to something better that will endure into the Age to come. The message to the seven churches was Jesus’ warning. It was to motivate people to rouse themselves from the comfort of their denominational religious mindsets. Those who hear and take heed to these warnings have an opportunity to become overcomers and rule with Christ in the Tabernacles Age that follows.

Chapter 11: The Seven Churches

The first chapter of Revelation corresponds to the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet—the *alef*. It literally means a bull, but also signifies “first, primary, or strength.” So in the first chapter of revelation we see Christ presented (in Greek) as “*alpha and omega*” ([Rev. 1:8](#)), which is synonymous with “*the first and the last*” ([Rev. 1:17](#)). In this case the emphasis is on the “first,” though it is linked with the “last,” that is, the (Greek) *omega* and (Hebrew) *tav*. Jesus is also presented as the “*first-born of the dead*” ([Rev. 1:5](#)).

The first chapter is also linked in this way to the last chapter, which emphasizes the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet (*tav*).

The second chapter of Revelation is the *beth* chapter. Beth is the second letter of the Hebrew alphabet. It means a house or household. Hence, the church is presented to us as God’s household, or, as Paul would say, “*the household of faith*” ([Gal. 6:10](#)).

Three Churches

The word translated “church” is from the Greek word, *ecclesia*, which is the normal word for “church.” It means “a gathering of citizens called out from their homes into some public place, an assembly.”

The nation of Israel, then, was the first church, and it was called out of Egypt at Passover in order to assemble before God at Sinai to be made into a kingdom of priests ([Exodus 19:6](#)). I call it the Passover Church, because Passover was its dominant feature.

The second church was called out of Judaism at Pentecost ([Acts 2:1](#)) to assemble before God in the upper room to be made into a kingdom of priests a second time ([1 Peter 2:9](#)). I call it the Pentecost Church, because Pentecost was its dominant feature and anointing.

The third church is yet to come. It is the assembly of overcomers who are called out of the Pentecost Church into a greater anointing of the feast of Tabernacles. I call this the Tabernacles Church, because Tabernacles will be its dominant feature in the age to come.

The first and second church partially manifested the Kingdom of God in the earth, but they proved to be inadequate in fulfilling the purpose of God. Yet each was necessary in God’s three-step program, even as all three feasts were necessary to bring a complete revelation. Passover was (and is) necessary to bring justification, but by itself can only impute *legal* perfection. Pentecost was (and is) necessary to bring sanctification as we learn obedience and experience the law being written on our hearts; yet it is inadequate by itself, for it teaches us obedience as we grow toward the feast of Tabernacles.

To experience God fully, we must hear three calls of God. These three calls are represented also by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob-Israel. *Abraham* is the father of faith ([Gal. 3:7](#)) and corresponds to Passover, which extends justification by faith in the blood of the Lamb. *Isaac* is the one who was dedicated to God as His servant when his father placed him on the altar in [Gen. 22:9](#). Hence, God calls Israel, “My servant” ([Isaiah 42:19](#)). Servants learn obedience when led by the Holy Spirit, which is also the main purpose of Pentecost.

Jacob is the classic overcomer, whose name was changed to *Israel*. When he was transformed from a believer to an overcomer, God gave him a new name that reflected this change. Israel means “God rules,” and the name testified of the sovereignty of God in his life. Because he had this revelation, he was qualified to rule under God. As a mere believer during his earlier life, Jacob had been a deceiver and supplanter (usurper), as his name indicated. He tried to fulfill prophecy by the power of the flesh. It was only when He realized that he was called to bear witness to the works of God that he became an overcomer. *Israel* is the name given to “Amen” People.

Two Sets of Seven Churches

There were seven churches under the Old Covenant which run parallel to the seven churches under the New Covenant. The seven Old Covenant Churches have been overlooked by Bible teachers, probably because they think of the Church as being only a New Covenant entity. Yet [Acts 7:38](#) speaks of “*the church in the wilderness*” that was called out of Egypt under Moses.

In John’s day there were seven main churches of Asia that John oversaw from his house outside of Ephesus. Each of these received a message from the Alpha and Omega. Those churches, however, when viewed prophetically, also represented seven successive church ages.

Rick Renner, in his book, [A Light in Darkness](#), Vol. 1, p. 50, sets forth the seven church ages as follows:

1. Ephesus: The Apostolic Age—Pentecost to 170 A.D.
2. Smyrna: The Age of Persecution—170–312 A.D.
3. Pergamum: The Age of False Doctrine—312–606 A.D.
4. Thyatira: The Age of Darkness—606–1520 A.D.
5. Sardis: The Age of Reformation—1520–1750 A.D.
6. Philadelphia: The Age of Missions—1750–1906 A.D.
7. Laodicea: The Age of Apostasy—1906 to the present

My own view is a little different, but overall, our views divide the church eras into similar time periods. I do not know how “The Apostolic Age” could continue to the year 170, when the last apostle died around the year 100. Likewise, history shows that persecutions at the hands of Rome began shortly after the martyrdom of Paul in 67, which is long before the year 170.

Insofar as the time of the seventh church is concerned, Renner seems to identify the “Apostasy” with the Pentecostal outpourings in Wales and in Azusa Street in Los Angeles. I see Laodicea not so much in terms of “Apostasy” as with Captivity. The reason for this is that I compare the New Testament church eras with those of the Old Testament.

In my view, the church eras are as follows:

1. Ephesus: “Desirable” (33–64 A.D.)
2. Smyrna: “Bitter” or “Myrrh” (64–313 A.D.)
3. Pergamum: “Married to Power” (313–529 A.D.)
4. Thyatira: “Castle of the Goddess” (529–1517 A.D.)
5. Sardis: “Precious stone; Remnant” (1517–1776 A.D.)
6. Philadelphia: “Brotherly Love” (1776–1914 A.D.)
7. Laodicea: “Power of the Laity” (1914–1993 A.D.)

These seven churches have presented a progression of prophetic history that is seen in their names. (I will explain this as we proceed in our study of each church.) It is of great help also to compare them to the seven churches under the Old Covenant, for these run directly parallel to the New Covenant churches. By comparing the two corresponding churches, we can see how the same problems inherent in the Old Covenant churches reappeared in their New Covenant church counterparts.

The seven Old Covenant churches are:

1. The Moses Church: Refusal to hear ([Exodus 20:18–21](#))
2. The Korah Church: Rebellion (Numbers 16)
3. The Balaam Church: Misuse of Power (Numbers 22–25, 31)

4. The Jezebel Church: The Persecutor Church ([1 Kings 18:13](#))
5. The Remnant Church: The Persecuted Remnant ([1 Kings 19:14–18](#))
6. The Hezekiah Church: Strength to delay captivity (2 Kings 18–20)
7. The Captivity Church: Prospering in Babylon (Jeremiah 29)

John must have known the connections between the two sets of churches, because he usually linked them with Scriptural references. For example, the third is the Balaam Church under the Old Covenant, which corresponds to the Church in Pergamum. John gives criticism of this church in [Rev. 2:14](#), saying, “*you have there some who hold the teachings of Balaam.*” In other words, the problem seen in the Balaam church is the same as in the Church in Pergamum.

Likewise, the fourth Church (Thyatira) corresponds to the Jezebel Church under the Old Covenant. Hence, John writes to Thyatira, saying, “*I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel*” ([Rev. 2:20](#)).

If we keep this connection in mind in the course of our study of the seven churches, we will be able to understand John’s messages much better. The Old Covenant churches lay foundations for understanding their corresponding New Covenant churches.

The Seven Spirits of God

[Rev. 1:4](#) tells us that this message to the seven churches comes also from the seven Spirits of God. One of these seven Spirits is needed most by each church. In other words, if each church had the character of its corresponding Spirit, it would have avoided its unique problem.

The seven Spirits of God, as I wrote earlier, are listed in [Isaiah 11:2](#). Their correlation to the seven churches is not in the order given in Isaiah, but nonetheless, they are there.

1. Ephesus needed *the Spirit of the Lord* to overcome.
2. Smyrna needed *the Spirit of Understanding* to overcome.
3. Pergamum needed *the Spirit of Counsel* to overcome.
4. Thyatira needed *the Spirit of Knowledge* to overcome.
5. Sardis needed *the Spirit of Wisdom* to overcome.
6. Philadelphia needed *the Spirit of Might* (or Strength) to overcome.
7. Laodicea needed *the Spirit of the Fear of the Lord* to overcome.

Those who appropriated the Spirit of God given in his/her time became overcomers, because they were able to see the problem and overcome it in their own lives. Even so, in order to be perfect and complete, the overcomers, as individuals, needed to appropriate all seven Spirits of the Lord in order to be like Christ.

In the end, each Spirit must be united with the other six in order to be able to function fully, as none are truly separate from the others. For example, how can one function with Wisdom without having the Spirit of Knowledge and Understanding as well? Hence, the distinctions are made, not to set forth a lack of unity, but to accommodate human language which has no single word that encompasses the full scope of the character of God. Each is unique, but also forms a part of the whole.

The Seven Rewards for Overcoming

The seven rewards offered to the overcomers do not appear to be specific to the overcomers of each church age. Like the seven Spirits of God, all seven rewards are given to every overcomer. They are separated and are distinct in these messages in order to emphasize the theme of each message, but in the end it is not possible to receive one reward apart from the others.

1. Ephesus overcomers are given access to *the Tree of Life* ([Rev. 2:7](#)).
2. Smyrna overcomers are given *a Crown of Life* ([Rev. 2:10](#)).
3. Pergamum overcomers are given *the White Stone* ([Rev. 2:17](#)).
4. Thyatira overcomers are given *the Morning Star* ([Rev. 2:28](#)).
5. Sardis overcomers are given *White Clothing* ([Rev. 3:5](#)).
6. Philadelphia overcomers are made *Pillars in the Temple* ([Rev. 3:12](#)).
7. Laodicea overcomers are given *a Seat in the Throne* ([Rev. 3:21](#)).

With this overview, we can now study the specific messages that the glorified Son of Man and the Seven Spirits gave to each of the seven churches—the household of faith.

Chapter 12: Ephesus (33–64 A.D.)

Ephesus, with its beautiful man-made harbor, was the Gateway between East and West. In 53 A.D. Paul preached there ([Acts 18:19](#)) toward the end of his second missionary journey, as he was returning to church headquarters in Antioch ([Acts 18:22](#)).

Ephesus was known for its great temple of Artemis, considered to be one of the seven wonders of the world. It was 425 x 220 feet with 127 marble columns, each 60 feet high. The temple was located on the very spot where, according to the town clerk in Paul's day, her image had fallen to the earth from heaven ([Acts 19:35](#)). Scholars suggest that a meteor may have fallen to the earth at that location.

The original temple had burned to the ground on July 20 or 21 of 356 B.C., on the birthdate of Alexander the Great. The popular explanation was that Artemis had been out of the temple at that time in order to observe the birth of Alexander, and during her absence the temple burned down.

The temple was rebuilt over a period of 220 years. Hence, the temple observed by the Apostle Paul many years later was Artemis' second temple, which was far greater than the original one. Visitors arriving by ship could look to the top of the mountain and see the great statue looking down to observe every ship that arrived in Ephesus.

There were many schools of philosophy, gymnasiums, and, of course, the Great Theater. Its wealth gave its inhabitants the highest living standard in Asia Minor. It was ranked fourth among the greatest cities of the Roman Empire after Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch.

The grandeur of the Harbor Gate, the spacious Harbor Boulevard made of white marble and lined with colonnades leading to the Great Theater on the hill, and the variety of languages being spoken on the streets must have impressed Paul and his companions as they entered the city with their mission to preach the word of God.

The top of the Harbor Boulevard in front of the Great Theater intersected a cross street, where one could choose one's activity. Turning right on Marble Street led to a school of philosophy. Turning left on Plateia Street led to the great Stadium and, farther on, to the Temple of Artemis. The conjunction of those streets gave men a choice of entertainment, education, or gladiator bloodshed (at the Stadium).

Ephesus was also a major government center, since the proconsul lived there. Ephesus was also the start of the postal route along the famous Roman road. In fact, the order of the seven churches in the book of Revelation is the actual order of cities on the postal route that circled around back to its starting point in Ephesus.

The diversity of cultures, philosophies, and religions in the city gave Christianity a safe haven in this city known for its tolerance. Paul was not the first Christian to come to Ephesus, for we know from [Acts 18:24](#) that he was preceded by Apollos, a preacher from Alexandria, Egypt, who had come while knowing only "the baptism of John" ([Acts 18:25](#)). Later, Priscilla and Aquila, who had been evicted from Rome by the emperor Claudius ([Acts 18:2](#)), went to Corinth, where they met the Apostle Paul during his second missionary journey. They accompanied Paul as far as Ephesus, where they went ashore while Paul continued his journey to Caesarea.

While in Ephesus, Priscilla and Aquila heard Apollos teaching in the synagogue. They took him aside and updated him on events of Jesus' crucifixion and the baptism of the Holy Spirit, so that he would know the full gospel of Christ.

Even so, Paul was probably the first apostle to nurture a group of believers into an organized assembly, or "church." Paul arrived in 53 A.D. John is said to have arrived after Paul's execution in 67 A.D., when he assumed the leadership role over the seven churches that Paul had established.

John, along with the community of believers, lived outside of the city limits on a hill known as Mount Ayasuluk, overlooking the Temple of Artemis. Living outside the city afforded some privacy for visiting Christian leaders. It provided an extra measure of toleration in a city full of pagan temples.

The First Flaw of the Church

The actual messages to the seven churches are recorded in Revelation 2 and 3. The first is to the church in Ephesus, where John himself ministered during the last half of his life. Did he personally deliver these message to the churches? We are not told. We only know that he received this message while he was at Patmos. It is likely that he sent individual messages to the churches while he was yet in exile.

The first church age began in 33 A.D. on the day of Pentecost ([Acts 2:1](#)) and ended in 64 A.D. when Nero began to persecute the church. When the persecutions began, the church entered its Smyrna phase. Smyrna means “bitter” and is associated with myrrh, an oil that was used to embalm the dead.

For the most part, the Ephesus phase of church history saw persecution only by the Jews, who viewed Christianity as a heretical sect of Judaism. During these years, the Roman government usually protected the Christians from excessive persecution.

Ephesus means “Desirable.” Its name contributes to the revelation of prophecy, when we correlate this to the first Old Covenant church—the Moses Church. Though the nation of Israel was not perfect when it came out of Egypt, nonetheless, the people had witnessed God’s deliverance at Passover and again at the Red Sea. Hence, it was at its height of faith, even though the Moses church often wanted to stone Moses and to return to their bondage in Egypt.

So also the first decades of the New Covenant church (the Ephesus era) were led by apostles and believers who had witnessed Christ’s death and resurrection at Passover of 33 A.D. Jesus Christ had come as their “Moses” on the 1480th Passover since the original feast when Israel left Egypt. The number 1480 is the numeric value of *christos* (Greek for “Christ”). Moses prophesied of His coming in [Deut. 18:18](#), and this is applied to Jesus in [Acts 3:22](#).

Ephesus, then, was the “desirable” church—the church that God desired, or favored. Even so, it was somewhat flawed, even as the Moses church had been flawed in earlier times. But before studying the strengths and weaknesses of the church in Ephesus, we need to see another prophetic connection.

Ephesus, the First Saul Church

King Saul was a prophetic type of the church as a whole. Saul had a legitimate anointing under Samuel, but because he was not of Judah, he did not have the lawful right to rule the House of Israel ([Gen. 49:10](#)). He was crowned king because the people “desired” a king too soon. His name, *Saul*, means “asked for, desired.” The people asked for a king, and God gave them the man whose name prophesied of their desire.

God gave them a man of the tribe of Benjamin, because the line of Judah was still being cleansed of its sin between Judah and Tamar (Genesis 38). It took ten generations for this cleansing to be complete ([Deut. 23:2](#)). David was the tenth generation, but he was not even born until Saul had reigned for ten years. So God chose Saul as a temporary king. Though he was the best in the land from a fleshly view ([1 Sam. 9:2](#)), he could never fulfill the calling of Judah.

The underlying problem was the heart of the people themselves. Saul was a mere reflection of the people’s heart and will. They got what they asked for. They were given the desire of their rebellious hearts. God explained the problem in [1 Sam. 8:7](#),

⁷ And the Lord said to Samuel, “Listen to the voice of the people in regard to all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them.”

No doubt most of the people would have disagreed with this assessment, for they did not know their own hearts. They saw no conflict between serving God and having an earthly king. So Saul was crowned king on the day of “wheat harvest,” which, in years to come, would be called by the Greek term, *Pentecost*, or “fiftieth day.” It was the fiftieth day from the wave sheaf offering ([Lev. 23:16](#)). The people offered the first-fruits of barley on the first day, and wheat on the fiftieth day. After each first-fruits offering the people were able to return home and harvest their crop.

At Saul’s coronation, Samuel told the people in [1 Sam. 12:17, 18](#),

¹⁷ Is it not the wheat harvest today? I will call to the Lord, that He may send thunder and rain. Then you will know and see that your wickedness is great which you have done in the sight of the Lord by asking for yourselves a king. ¹⁸ So Samuel called to the Lord, and the Lord sent thunder and rain that day, and all the people greatly feared the Lord and Samuel.

Rain was rare at the time of wheat harvest ([Prov. 26:1](#)). The rain that fell on the day of Saul’s coronation was a type of the Holy Spirit that was to be poured out later on the day of Pentecost ([Joel 2:28](#); [Acts 2:16, 17](#)). Its purpose was to show the believers that they had done wickedly in desiring an earthly king to rule over them. Nonetheless, Samuel admonished and warned the people, telling them in [1 Sam. 12:24, 25](#),

²⁴ Only fear the Lord and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you. ²⁵ But if you still do wickedly, both you and your king shall be swept away.

This warning applies equally to the New Covenant church, because Saul was a type of the church under Pentecost. Not understanding this, the Roman church has misunderstood Jesus’ words to Peter in [Matt. 16:18](#). When Jesus said that “*the gates of hell will not overpower it*,” that is, the church, they assume this means the church that was established at Pentecost in Acts 2. They know nothing of the feast of Tabernacles, nor of the church of the overcomers. Hence, they place their faith in “Saul,” rather than in “David,” and do not realize that Saul’s rule was destined to be temporary. The rule of the Roman pontiff, along with all denominational rulers, must give way to Christ and the overcomers in order to move forward into the age of Tabernacles that lies ahead.

All of this relates directly to the church of Ephesus, for it is not only the Moses church, but it is also the beginning of the Saul church. The first year or two of Saul’s reign was quite good ([1 Sam. 13:1 KJV](#)). Then the rebellion began to manifest openly. Saul was impatient and took it upon himself to offer the sacrifice ([1 Sam. 13:9](#)), which he was not called to do. As a result, Samuel told Saul, “*now your kingdom shall not endure*” ([1 Sam. 13:14](#)).

The root problem was that the church under Saul’s rule had rejected God as king and wanted to be ruled by a man who would act as their intermediary. This is the spirit of denominationalism, where earthly organizations claim to be “the true church.” They claim that membership in the earthly organization is equivalent to membership in the heavenly assembly.

In effect, such claims to power give men the power of granting salvation to others by approving them for membership. Conversely, denominational leaders also claim the power to exclude men from heaven by their power of excommunication.

However, the true church is under the sole power of God to approve or disapprove membership ([Heb. 12:22, 23](#)). Members “*are enrolled in heaven*,” and any earthly membership rolls are secondary and meaningless if they conflict with the heavenly record.

By understanding the story of King Saul, along with the story of Moses, we may know the background of types and shadows that show us why there was divine criticism of the church in Ephesus. The church had left its first love. It had followed the example of the people who had desired to be ruled by men directly and God only indirectly. This set the example for the other churches that was then followed throughout church history.

The Message

[Revelation 2:1](#) says,

¹ To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands, says this:

“The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand” is Jesus Christ. He is the true Ruler of the church. He is the true High Priest *“who walks among the seven golden lampstands.”* Unlike Saul, Jesus Christ is the High Priest of the Order of Melchizedek, having both civil and priestly authority as a King-Priest. Saul had pretended to be of that order by offering the sacrifice, but Samuel denied him that position. As a Pentecostal King, crowned by a rebellious people, Saul was not given the Melchizedek priesthood. Only the overcomers (foreshadowed by David) are Melchizedek priests under their great High Priest.

[Revelation 2:2](#) continues,

² I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot endure evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false; ³ But I have this against you, that you have left your first love.

The church had done many good things. The church had good discernment in those days, so that they could distinguish between those who were genuine apostles and those who were not. This implies that there were more than just twelve apostles (eleven plus Paul, who ultimately replaced Judas). The twelve were obvious, although some disputed Paul's apostolic authority. Yet Ephesus had confirmed Paul and others as well.

The Greek word *apostolos*, “apostle,” refers first to one who is sent. However, in Greek culture it had a broader meaning. Rick Renner tells us:

“During the time of the ancient Greek orator Demosthenes (384–322 BC), the word apostolos was a naval term that described an admiral, the fleet of ships that traveled with him, and the specialized crew who accompanied and assisted the admiral. The fleet would be sent out to sea on a mission to locate territories where civilization was nonexistent. Once an uncivilized region was identified... they would begin the process of transforming a strange land into a replica of life as they believed it should be. Their purpose was total colonization of the uncivilized territory

“The word apostolos was so closely associated with the idea of traveling that it eventually became synonymous with the idea of a passport or a travel document.

“If a person wanted to exit a country, he had to possess a travel document that was essentially an export license, an exit visa, or a passport. This legal document was called an apostolos—the same word translated ‘apostle.’ This document guaranteed the right of passage and the ability to move freely from one place to another” (A Light in Darkness, Vol. 1, p. 294).

Christians used the term in much the same way, although their apostles were sent out to bring Kingdom Civilization to the world. It was a new culture based upon the right of Jesus Christ to rule and upon the moral order written in the divine law, the prophets, and the gospels.

A true apostle was identified by his faithfulness to this purpose. If he labored to bring the church into a foreign culture or civilization, he was a false apostle, a mere admiral working for Rome or Greece.

Leaving One's First Love

The core problem of Ephesus was that they had left their first love. Many have speculated as to the meaning of this statement. G. Campbell Morgan understood that this was a reference to the church being an unfaithful wife. Indeed, that is certainly true. But to really understand this, Scripture gives us two prophetic stories: the first in the time of Moses, and the second in the time of Saul.

With Saul we see how the people had rejected God (Christ) as their king, as a woman may also reject her husband. Perhaps more specifically, the “woman” had *desired* another man, preferring his word over that of her Husband. The “Saul” problem we have already discussed. The problem in Moses’ day is seen in Exodus 20, when God desired the church to meet Him in the mount after giving the Ten Commandments. The people’s reaction is given in [Exodus 20:18, 19](#),

¹⁸ And all the people perceived the thunder and the lightning flashes and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood at a distance. ¹⁹ Then they said to Moses, “Speak to us yourself, and we will listen; but let not God speak to us, lest we die.”

This was a marriage ceremony, for the prophets later tell us that God was married to Israel ([Jer. 3:14 KJV](#)). In fact, the entire prophecy of Hosea pictured God’s marriage to Israel. Yet at their very wedding ceremony, with Moses as the minister of that marriage covenant, the people’s fear of God was stronger than their love. They refused to consummate the wedding on the Mount, even though Moses urged them to meet with God. [Exodus 20:20, 21](#) continues,

²⁰ And Moses said to the people, “Do not be afraid; for God has come in order to test you, and in order that the fear of Him may remain with you, so that you may not sin.” ²¹ So the people stood at a distance, while Moses approached the thick cloud where God was.

The people wanted Moses to stand between them and God. Rather than hear the voice of God directly, they wanted Moses to hear God’s word and then tell them what God said. So it is with the denominational spirit, where men prefer to listen to men telling them what God said. Fearing God’s righteous nature, and thinking of themselves as sinners, they believe that the only way to survive is to maintain an *indirect* relationship with God.

No wife who loves her husband wants an indirect relationship with him. Distant relationships are for those driven by fear, not by love.

But Jesus is the God of the Old Testament. He is Yahweh who came in the flesh. When He came to do His work on earth, He became the true Mediator between God and man. It was wrong for the Israelites to want Moses to mediate between them and God, but it was right to have Jesus as the Mediator ([1 Tim. 2:5](#)). Jesus said in [John 14:6](#), “*no man comes to the Father, but through Me.*”

There is no Scripture demanding that any man must go through a man or an organization in order to come to the Father—or even to Jesus. So let us return to our first love as overcomers. Let Jesus be our true desire, placing all others in a relationship of secondary importance.

Repentance

[Revelation 2:5](#) says,

⁵ Remember, therefore, from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place—unless you repent.

Here the Spirit of the Lord gives the church a very sober warning. They were to remember from where they had fallen. Fallen from where? From the place where they had left their first love (vs. 4).

The Old Testament patterns show that they had rejected Christ's direct rule, desiring a man to rule over them. First they desired Moses to hear God and to tell them what God said ([Exodus 20:19](#)); later, they desired to have a man rule them as king ([1 Sam. 8:5](#)). Leaving their first love was starting a Christian denomination, which put distance between God and the people.

The purpose of a church or a preacher is to point people to Christ, not to point to men or organizations. It is not to recruit members for an earthly organization, but to lead people to Christ, so that they may be enrolled in the assembly in heaven ([Heb. 12:22](#)). There is nothing inherently evil about earthly organizations, as long as they do not steal the affections of the bride of Christ by causing the people to leave their first love. The problem comes when people's faith shifts from Christ to the church and its leadership.

Somehow the church in Ephesus had strayed into denominationalism in their honor of men. Perhaps the people already honored John himself more than they should. It is interesting to see that John was writing to his own church, wherein he was the undisputed leader as the main apostle to all of the seven churches. The problem, no doubt, was not in John, but in the people themselves, who had inadvertently put John in Christ's place. With John giving them the word of God, they no longer felt the need to seek the word from Christ Himself.

Later, the rest of the church would begin doing the same. As time passed, the church began to *forbid* men to hear God's voice for themselves. The purpose of church organizations is to teach people to hear God for themselves. The purpose of gatherings was to allow the people to share what God had revealed to them during the previous week, so that the group might discern and make any corrections where necessary. [1 Cor. 14:26–29](#) says,

²⁶ What is the outcome then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification [i.e., building up or strengthening the church]. ²⁷ If anyone speaks in a tongue, it should be by two or at the most three, and each in turn, and let one interpret; ²⁸ but if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in the church; and let him speak to himself and to God. ²⁹ And let two or three prophets speak, and the others pass judgment [discern, bear witness or not].

When gatherings became too large, instead of splitting into smaller house groups, the leaders began meeting in large buildings. In such a setting fewer and fewer people were able to participate or share with others as Paul had instructed. This was when the church became an organization or a building. This was when the people began to depend upon a man to hear God on their behalf, for it no longer seemed necessary to hear God for one's self. As it evolved further, the leadership, believing that it had all necessary truth, began to suppress other revelation (along with carnal ideas), and eventually forbade the laity the right to hear God for themselves. This was enforced by excommunication and ultimately by death and even by torture. All was done in the name of Unity.

It all began with a simple shift in loyalty from God to men. Men thought they could serve two masters—and indeed, this was possible, as long as God took precedence and the leader truly followed God with his whole heart. But as Israel learned many years earlier, they wanted a king “*like all the nations*” ([1 Sam. 8:5](#)), and that is what they got. The church too desired a leader “*like all the nations*,” and so they were given the desire of their hearts.

Removing the Lampstand

The solution was to remember—to go back to the point of departure—from where they had fallen. The church was to go back to the original point of deception, where the carnal mind conceived its desire for a man (other than Jesus Himself) to rule over them. The Spirit of the Lord issued a call for the church to repent and go back to the way things were earlier.

If they did not repent, God said, “*I am coming to you, and will remove your lampstand out of its place*” ([Rev. 2:5](#)). What does this mean?



The metaphor refers to the lampstand in the sanctuary in Jerusalem, which the Romans had removed earlier in 70 A.D. It is pictured on the Arch of Titus as part of the booty taken to Rome when the temple was destroyed. But this happened only because God had first removed their spiritual lampstand from the temple in heaven on account of the sin of Jerusalem. Things happen in the spirit before they happen on earth.

For Ephesus to receive such a warning was no doubt very sobering to the church. In fact, the Spirit of the Lord which issued this warning apparently did not interpret [Matt. 16:18](#) in the way that the church did in years to come.

The lampstand in heaven could retain its position only if the church returned to its first love. But if the church on earth no longer reflected the truth that was in heaven, the lampstand would be removed, and Ephesus would lose its authority as a church. God would cast it aside, even as He had done already with the tabernacle of Shiloh, Solomon's temple, and the second temple in Jerusalem.

These were not idle threats. Three precedents had already been set in biblical history. We do not know if the church in Ephesus actually corrected the problem, because John leaves this question unanswered. If so, it was only a temporary correction.

The Nicolaitans

[Revelation 2:6](#) says,

⁶ yet this you do have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

Historically speaking, we learn from Cormanin's [Complete History of the Popes](#), Vol. 1, p. 30,

"The Nicolaitans, the disciples of Carpocrates and of his son Epiphanus, taught promiscuous concubinage, and rendered themselves guilty of a great crime in so doing in the sight of God."

Concubines are a lesser form of marriage that renders the wife a virtual slave. Biblical law recognizes two kinds of marriage, as I explained in my book, [Old and New Covenant Marriage](#). In the Old Covenant, God's wife (Israel) was a picture of Hagar, the slave-wife of Abram ([Gal. 4:24, 25](#)). In the New Covenant, God's wife is pictured as Sarah, the free woman.

The Nicolaitans taught and practiced concubinage, and this became a symptom of a spiritual problem in the church itself. The early church in Ephesus did indeed hate the doctrines of the Nicolaitans, but at the same time they had left their first love. They were moving away from a direct and full marriage relationship with Christ and were moving toward an *indirect* relationship with Christ—which spawns slavery.

Slaves are not allowed to have a direct relationship with God. If a slave bride receives revelation, she is not allowed to act upon it without the approval of her master. The master assumes veto power over his slave. Hence, when the church (i.e., the assembly, or congregation) becomes enslaved to the church hierarchy of a denomination, it is no longer Sarah, but Hagar, and it can only bring forth an Ishmael.

The name, Nicolaitan, literally means “conquering the laity” (that is, the common people). It refers to the rise of a priestly hierarchy that usurps the place of Christ over the people. This is the Nicolaitan spirit that Jesus hates, for He desires more than anything to have a personal relationship with His bride. He does not desire a slave-bride, but one who can provide a double witness in the earth. Only a “Sarah” bride, having a New Covenant marriage relationship with Him, can fulfill His deepest desire and bring the Kingdom into the earth. Only a “Sarah” bride can bring forth the children of promise.

It is appropriate, then, that the message to the church in Ephesus would bring up the Nicolaitan problem. Its very name contains the revelation of the problem, for the essence of denominationalism is to “conquer the laity.” God wants the laity to be free, not in bondage to men. God wants the laity to have the freedom to hear God’s voice and to act upon it without fear of persecution.

The church in Ephesus apparently recognized that under the New Covenant it was not right to have concubines—or even to have multiple wives ([1 Tim. 3:2](#)). We do not know if they understood the deeper problem of Old Covenant marriages themselves, where even one wife can be treated as a bond-woman. Because the church has always lived by progressive revelation, there were many things they yet had to learn over a period of time ([John 21:25](#)). In fact, the main purpose of the Holy Spirit was to “*guide you into all truth*” ([John 16:13](#)).

The Overcomers

[Revelation 2:7](#) concludes the message, saying,

⁷ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.

The overcomers are those who have ears to hear what the Spirit is saying. This implies that the non-overcomers in the church do *not* have the ability to hear what God says. Let me hasten to say, however, that there are many who have the ability to hear, but yet they do not necessarily know that they hear. The word of God comes in many ways, sometimes by direct revelation, and at other times through other people, and at other times through signs. An overcomer is one who bears witness to the word of God, for it resonates within him/her.

Such overcomers are granted the right “*to eat of the tree of life*.” To hear the word is to eat of it. It is why the prophets were told to “eat” the book. This was a spiritual act and had nothing to do with eating paper and ink. It was an act of assimilation, because we become what we eat and assimilate.

Eating from the tree of life, then, is to be interpreted as eating the word. The word is the tree of life. On another level, Christ is the Logos, the word made flesh, whose flesh we are to eat ([John 6:56](#)). Hence, He is the embodiment of the tree of life. When Adam and Eve ate of the other tree, they were eating of knowledge, which was not bad, but yet it was not Christ. One might say that the tree of knowledge was the Bible, but it was not the word. The Bible without the word brings traditions of men, in that it lacks true revelation, and it is thus only carnal knowledge of *what God said*.

It is fully appropriate that the Spirit’s message to Ephesus would end with the reward of eating from the tree of life. It is only by overcoming the denominational spirit and having a direct relationship with God that one can truly “*eat of the tree of life*.” This is Paradise on earth, as all know who have tasted of its fruit.

Chapter 13: Smyrna (64–313 A.D.)

Smyrna is located about 35 miles north of Ephesus. It was on the main road between the port of Ephesus and the governmental seat at Pergamum, so it was always an important stopover for officials as they made this trip. Smyrna too was a port city that had a beautiful harbor, but most dignitaries preferred coming to Asia Minor through Ephesus.

Whereas Ephesus' main worship center was the temple of Artemis, Smyrna's main temple was the temple of Cybele which stood on the slope of Mount Pagos just below the fortress at the top which was known as "The Crown of Cybele." As viewed from the harbor, the Mount was thought of as the head of Cybele, crowned by the fortress, and encircled around the "neck" by the "Street of Gold." Cybele's "necklace," made of marble colonnades, ran from east to west from the temple of Zeus to the temple of Cybele.

The other main street which intersected the Street of Gold was Sacred Way, starting at the Harbor Gate and going south up the slope to the fortress itself. This street was lined with a multitude of other shrines, altars, and temples, along with numerous shops.

The Stadium and the Theater stood closest to the fortress at the top of Mount Pagos. The Theater was the first of its kind in the region, and its patron-god was Dionysus, the god of wine, revelry, and debauchery, as well as the god of theater and actors. The Stadium, one of the largest in Asia Minor, seated about 30,000 people. It was the scene of much carnage, where countless Christians were killed or fed to wild beasts. Polycarp was the most famous of the Christians to be killed at this Stadium (155 A.D.).

Smyrna stood at the end of the longest road in the world, which connected the city with Nineveh and Babylon, ending finally in Susa, or Shushan, the capital of Persia. This 1500-mile highway was called the Royal Road, because it had been financed by the King of Persia in the fifth century before Christ. Merchants from the east continuously made the three-month journey to sell goods that were difficult to find in other parts of the empire. Hence, the city's marketplace was a shopper's paradise.

The famous Greek poet, Homer, was born near Smyrna, and so the city had minted coins bearing his image.

In ancient times, Smyrna had been a prosperous city, but due to internal conflicts and war the city completely collapsed around 600 B.C. Its temples were abandoned and fell into ruin. But 300 years later, Alexander the Great hunted in the area, and while he spent the night on Mount Pagos, he dreamed of the twin goddesses known as Nemeses. Their names were Righteous Anger and Vengeance, and they instructed him to restore Smyrna to its former glory.

Alexander believed that the Nemeses were an unusual manifestation of the goddess Cybele. He began the task of restoring Smyrna, but because he died young, the restoration project was not completed until the reign of Lysimachus (301–281 B.C.). Smyrna was one of the first planned cities in the world, and so its streets were laid out in straight lines intersecting each other to form "blocks."

The Cybele Cult

Although the cult of Cybele became one of the officially recognized Roman religions in 205 B.C., it remained repulsive to most of the Roman people themselves, because its rituals included bloodshed and self-mutilation. Rick Renner tells us,

"According to one of the primary legends concerning the origin of the cult, Cybele was an offspring of Zeus who was both male and female. When Zeus saw his new child, he was horrified and ordered the male organs to be removed—transforming the creature into the female goddess Cybele."

"Because the act of castration was involved in the creation of Cybele, the rituals connected to this pagan worship emphasized the virtues of self-mutilation and self-castration... A myth fundamental to Cybele worship"

stated that Attis, a god who fell in love with Cybele, was brutally castrated and bled to death. Therefore, on March 24 of each year, the chief priestess of Cybele—who was in fact a castrated man made into a ‘priestess’—came into the temple, slit his arms, drew blood, and offered it to Cybele in memory of Attis’ bungled castration. This annual event was called “The Day of Blood.”

“For the most part, males served Cybele as eunuch-priests, called galli... These galli had to emasculate themselves and then, from that point on, dress in feminine garments in order to be more closely identified with Cybele and deemed worthy to be called her ‘priestesses.’

*“Once their male organs had been removed, Cybele’s neutered ‘priestesses’ were considered a ‘third gender’—neither male nor female. The transformation of these men into galli was dramatic. They took female names, and their physical appearance became so feminine that they were frequently mistaken for genetically born women when they ventured beyond the temple grounds” (*A Light in Darkness*, Vol. 1, pp. 368, 369).*

Such was the state of the city when the first Christians arrived. The fanatical pagans of the city were among the most hostile to Christians that might be found anywhere in the empire, including Jerusalem. In fact, there was a large Jewish community in Smyrna, which knew how to use the spirit of the city against the Christians.

Judaism was recognized by the Roman government as a licensed religion (*religio licita*), so the pagans did not object to the presence of Jewish synagogues. At first, Christianity was considered to be a sect of Judaism, which gave Christians some degree of protection against Jewish persecution. However, after Paul’s first defense at his trial in Rome in 63 A.D., Nero realized that Christianity was separate and distinct from Judaism, and that they no longer offered sacrifice.

It was required that all religions make sacrifices either to Caesar himself or to God on behalf of Caesar. Judaism did the latter in the temple, but Christians could not fulfill either requirement. Hence, they began to be persecuted as a *religio illicita*, an unlicensed religion that was not recognized as having the right to exist in the Empire.

This made Smyrna even more dangerous to Christians, for they could not expect Roman protection from either pagans or Jews. The pagans were inspired by the twin Nemeses of Righteous Anger (i.e., Religious Zealotry) and Vengeance to kill the “atheist” Christians who did not worship their pagan gods. The Jews were inspired by the Old Covenant zealots in Judaism, who acted much like the Apostle Paul did in his early years. He describes himself in [1 Timothy 1:13](#), saying, “*I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor.*”

The Greek word translated “violent aggressor” is *hubristes*, which is the Greek word for a sadist. It is part of Paul’s list describing the characteristics of “*a depraved mind*” in [Rom. 1:30](#). Paul confesses to being motivated by such sadism in his treatment of the church during his early years as a religious zealot in good standing with the temple.

Smyrna and the Bitter Taste of Myrrh

Smyrna, then, is the church of the martyrs. The persecution in the city of Smyrna set the prophetic pattern for the Smyrna era of church history under Rome from 64–313 A.D. Historically, the Smyrna church age began when Nero began actively persecuting the church in 64 A.D. It ended finally with Constantine’s Edict of Milan in 313 A.D., at the end of an intense final decade of persecution from 303–313.

Smyrna means “myrrh,” a bitter herb representing death. Myrrh is an anointing oil which was used to prepare the dead for burial. The more one crushed it, the sweeter the fragrance. Tertullian, a Christian lawyer (145–202 A.D.), wrote to the Roman Emperor in his *Apology*, chapter 50,

“The oftener we are mown down by you, the more in number we grow; the blood of Christians is seed.”

So it was with the martyrs of this time period. They were crushed by the full fury of the Roman Empire, but the more they were killed, the more fragrant the aroma before God and men. Men marveled at their great courage and converted to Christ faster than Rome could kill them.

The Message

[Revelation 2:8](#), [9](#) says,

⁸ And to the angel of the church in Smyrna, write: The first and the last, who was dead, and has come to life, says this: ⁹ I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich), and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.

Christ addressed this persecuted church by the title “*The first and the last*.” It was to remind them that as *alpha* and *omega* (or *alef* and *tav*), He foreknew all of their persecution and was in control of it. It is natural for those under persecution to wonder if God has forgotten them, or if He has lost control of earthly events. But Christ says, “*I know your tribulation*.” Christ was well aware of their persecution, so He assures them that He is the Author of history. This persecution allowed the church to partake of His own sufferings.

Further, Christ says He “*was dead, and has to come to life*.” In other words, having overcome death by going through it, He encouraged the church of Smyrna to follow His example, knowing that they would receive a better resurrection. [Heb. 11:35](#) says,

³⁵ Women received back their dead by resurrection; and others were tortured, not accepting their release, in order that they might obtain a better resurrection.

Those Falsely Claiming to be Jews

When Jesus came to earth to claim the throne rights of His father David, the leaders of the temple disputed His claim. They wanted a different sort of messiah, one who would fight the Romans and make them an independent nation. Jesus, however, understood that God had raised up Rome as the iron empire described in [Dan. 7:7](#). To use the power of God to overthrow this fourth empire would have gone against the divine decree in the time of Jeremiah, when God raised up world empires to put Judah into captivity.

Furthermore, the religious leadership did not agree with Jesus’ teachings, for they held the traditions of men, by which they worshipped God in vain ([Isaiah 29:13](#), quoted in [Matt. 15:7–9](#)).

The rightful heir to the throne of Judah held in his hands the right to be called a Judahite (or, in Greek, a *Judean*). If any man of Judah—or any group of Judahites—revolted against the king, or if they moved to another country to start their own independent nation, they were no longer Judahites from a legal standpoint. Their genealogy would not change, of course, but they were no longer Judahite citizens. Neither could they claim status for their nation as the “true Judah.”

Judah was the territory and included only those who were ruled by the rightful king—in this case, King Jesus.

A good example is found in the story of Absalom’s revolt against David. When David and his loyal followers left Jerusalem as a refugee for a time, one might ask which group was truly *Judah*? Was it the majority of the Judahites who were ruled by Absalom? Or was it the small group who were loyal to David? From a legal perspective, where was *Judah* at that time? Was true Judah not in exile with David?

Since the New Testament conflict was simply a replay of Absalom usurping the throne of David, we see the same question arise in the first century. Jesus was the rightful Heir to the throne, but his throne was usurped by the chief priests who were acting as spiritual children of Absalom.

A thousand years later, when Jesus came to Judah as the rightful Heir of the throne of David, those who recognized His lawful right remained Judahites (“Jews”), but those who rejected Him lost the right to be called Jews.

Knowing this, the Apostle Paul says in [Rom. 2:28, 29](#),

²⁸ For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly; neither is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. ²⁹ But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise [“Judah”] is not from men, but from God.

Those who were recognized by men as Jews were not the group that God recognized as Jews. Men’s opinions, even when they are the majority opinion, are always wrong when they conflict with God’s truth. Hence, when we refer to today’s Jews as *Jews*, it is understood that we are merely accommodating men’s definition of the term. Having God’s perspective—and knowing the law—we understand that those who follow the King of Judah are the true Jews—if not by genealogy, then certainly by legal citizenship.

In [Rom. 2:29](#) Paul says that a true Judahite was one who praised God, because Judah means praise. But the Jews in Smyrna were not true Jews at all, because they blasphemed God by their persecution of Christians. Recall from [1 Tim. 1:13](#) that Paul considered himself to be a converted and reformed “blasphemer.”

John understood this as well. No physical connection to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, or Judah gave such Jews the God-given right to be called Jews. The seven Spirits of the Lord (and the glorified Christ Himself) instructed John to write about “*those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.*” In fact, as we will see later, this was repeated in the message to the church of Philadelphia ([Rev. 3:9](#)).

For a full discussion of this issue, see my two books: [Who is a Jew?](#) and its companion, [Who is an Israelite?](#)

We know from biblical history that the *so-called* Jews were the first persecutors of the church. After driving many Christians out of Judea, Jews from other cities often filed official complaints against the Christians in order to induce Rome to arrest them. Both John and Paul witnessed these things and wrote freely about the conflict.

It was also common for the authorities to confiscate the property of those who were accused of unlawful behavior. So Christ recognized the “poverty” of the Smyrna church, yet tells them “*but you are rich.*” They were poor in worldly goods, but they were rich in faith, for they had laid up for themselves “*treasures in heaven*” ([Matt. 6:20](#)).

The Greek word translated “rich” is *plousios*, which is a word that means “extremely wealthy,” one who enjoys a superabundance of possessions and finances. Yet in the natural, the Christians of Smyrna suffered from abject poverty. Most of the jobs in Smyrna, like in many cities, were available only to members of a trade union (guild, or *collegia*) who held a monopoly on its particular type of work.

Guilds also had patron gods and goddesses, and they required their members to sacrifice and give homage to those pagan deities. The Christians could not join guilds without worshiping its patron god. Hence, the Christians of Smyrna found themselves not only poor but absolutely destitute—the equivalent of modern homelessness. Neither did Christians have any recourse to seek legal protection, for they were part of an illegal religion and therefore were excluded from the rights and protections afforded even to the poorest of the pagans.

The Christians of Smyrna were outcasts living in absolute poverty in a Christian subculture. John’s message from Jesus comforted them by noting their extreme spiritual wealth in the sight of God.

As we will see later, the church of Laodicea, which describes the church at the end of the age, had done the opposite of the church of Smyrna. The Laodiceans were rich in earthly goods, but not in the true wealth of the Spirit. It appears to refer to the Prosperity message that has the appearance of faith, but is usually a form of positive thinking.

Be Faithful Until Death

[Revelation 2:10](#) says,

¹⁰ Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold [*idou*], the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

Rick Renner says this about the Greek word translated “behold.”

*“The word ‘behold’ is the Greek word *idou*, a word that is very difficult to translate. The King James Version translates it as behold, but in our contemporary world, this ancient Greek word might be better rendered, “Wow!” ([A Light in Darkness](#), Vol. 1, p. 442)*

Thayer’s Greek Lexicon tells us that *idou* is used “when a thing is specified which seems impossible and yet occurs.” Renner continues,

“Although not a literal translation, it carries the idea: ‘Wow—if you could see what I see! What is about to happen to you nearly leaves Me speechless. Yes, I am the One who knows the end from the beginning—but even I am amazed to see what you are about to endure...” (p. 442)

Men always fear persecution and suffering. But when they understand that God is with them, and that this persecution is built into the divine plan, they may take comfort in knowing that there is purpose in it. Smyrna was told that they were being “tested” to see if their faith was real.

Jesus told them that some of them would be cast into prison. Roman prisons were horrible places. Prisoners were normally lowered by a ladder into a windowless room, and when the upper door was shut, they remained in total darkness. There were no toilet facilities and no food or water, except for what their friends might be allowed to bring them.

Men were not sentenced to go to prison for set periods of time. They were there to await execution, though many died before they were executed. Hence, when the Christians in Smyrna were warned in advance that some would be cast into prison, they certainly understood this to mean that they would die in a terrible place, and that their bodies would probably be cast out with the sewage into the nearby river.

This prophecy was fulfilled first among the believers in Smyrna itself, but also on a broader scale in the entire Empire during the Smyrna church era from 64–313 A.D.

Tribulation

Jesus told them in [Revelation 2:10](#), “*you will have tribulation.*” The Greek word translated “tribulation” is *thlipsis*, a word that was first used to describe the manner of execution of a man in earlier times, who was forced to lie down while a boulder was slowly lowered upon him. The pressure slowly crushed him to death under its weight. This is *thlipsis*. It refers to coming under pressure that causes distress.

The Spirit focused upon “*tribulation ten days,*” prophesying of the ten distinct times of persecution initiated during the Smyrna era.

1. Nero (67 A.D.)
2. Domitian (81 A.D.)
3. Trajan (108 A.D.)
4. Marcus Aurelius Antoninus (162 A.D.)

5. Severus (192 A.D.)
6. Maximinus (235 A.D.)
7. Decius (249 A.D.)
8. Valerian (257 A.D.)
9. Aurelian (274 A.D.)
10. Diocletian (303 A.D.)

The final persecution (under Diocletian from 303–313 A.D.) lasted ten years until it was fully stopped by Constantine. Diocletian, the Roman Emperor, ordered the destruction of churches, the burning of Bibles, and all Christians to sacrifice to the Roman gods. These edicts were issued in Nicomedia, the capital of the Eastern half of the Empire.

Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea at that time, tells us that he personally witnessed many of the martyrdoms in the city of Tyre, where men were given to the wild beasts. But two years into the persecution, Diocletian was struck with mental illness, forcing him to retire in 305 A.D. He was replaced by Maximian, who was replaced in turn by Licinius.

In those days there were four Caesars—two in the East and two in the West. Diocletian himself had divided the empire earlier in 285 A.D., putting each half under two caesars. The main persecutions took place in the East. In the West, the emperors disagreed with the policy of persecution, and so they performed only minimal persecution to satisfy the official government policy. Constantine was one of those Western Caesars, and as he increased in power, he put an end to the persecutions in the territory that he controlled. Constantine was a British prince. His mother, Helen of York, was a strong Christian.

Constantine issued an edict in 306 A.D. granting religious toleration to the Christians in Spain, Gaul, and Britain. As Constantine gained territory, he extended his policy of religious toleration until finally, after taking Rome itself, he was able to end the time of persecution altogether in 313. The end of persecution also brought the church into a new situation with new challenges in the Pergamum era.

The Overcomers' Reward

[Revelation 2:11](#) says,

¹¹ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.

Previously, in verse 10, Smyrna overcomers were promised “*the crown of life*.” This crown was not a valuable, golden diadem, but a simple wreath (*stephanos*) that was given to victors in an athletic contest. The Greek word for an overcomer is a victor or champion. The value of a victor’s wreath was in the fact that it was a public recognition of achievement, which brought admiration from the people. Paul refers to this wreath in [1 Cor. 9:24, 25](#), saying,

²⁴ Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. ²⁵ And everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath [*stephanos*], but we an imperishable.

When God gives a *stephanos* to His people, it is an ironic fact that He gives recognition to those whom the world considers to be “*the scum of the world, the dregs of all things*” ([1 Cor. 4:13](#)). [James 1:12](#) speaks of this as well, saying,

¹² Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

No doubt this is the same “crown” that Paul claimed toward the end of his life, when he wrote in [2 Tim. 4:7, 8](#),

⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; ⁸ in the future there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

Perhaps John understood this “crown” as a contrast to the “crown of Cybele” which was how the city of Smyrna viewed the fortress on the top of Mount Pagos. The Mount was pictured as the head of the goddess, and the walls and towers of the fortress crowned her head.

It was commonly believed that a special reward—pictured as a crown—was to be given to those who had suffered martyrdom, or who had been faithful through persecution. Some went so far as to say that a believer had to be killed in order to become an overcomer. This gave rise to a change in the meaning of *martus*, or “martyr.” The original meaning of the word was a “witness,” but soon it referred to one who had been *killed* as a witness for Christ.

But not all martyrs are killed. An overcomer is not necessarily one who is killed, but one who bears witness to Christ as an Amen person. It is one who has an ear to hear what the Spirit says to the churches, for it is by hearing that one is able to bear witness by saying Amen.

The Korah Church

The Smyrna church corresponds to the Korah church under the Old Covenant. More specifically, the false Jews of “*the synagogue of Satan*” ([Rev. 2:9](#)) speaks of the Korah rebellion. [Num. 16:1–3](#) says,

¹ Now Korah the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, with Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took action, ² and they rose up before Moses, together with some of the sons of Israel, two hundred and fifty leaders of the congregation, chosen in the assembly, men of renown, ³ And they assembled together against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, “You have gone far enough, for all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is in their midst; so why do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the Lord?”

The cause of this rebellion is given in [Num. 16:9, 10](#),

⁹ Is it not enough for you that the God of Israel has separated you from the rest of the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to Himself, to do the work of service of the tabernacle of the Lord, and to stand before the congregation to minister to them; ¹⁰ and that He has brought you near, Korah, and all your brothers, sons of Levi, with you? And are you seeking for the priesthood also?”

Korah was a Levite, but he was not a priest. That is, he was not a descendant of Aaron. He was dissatisfied with his calling as a Levite to minister at the tabernacle. So he desired to replace Aaron as high priest. In other words, he had rejected the word of the Lord that Aaron was to be the high priest ([Exodus 28:1](#)).

Korah’s primary motive was envy and ambition, which caused him to rebel against the word of the Lord. However, Korah was able to convince 250 leaders of the congregation that Moses and Aaron were unfit to lead Israel to the Promised Land. Earlier, in Numbers 13 and 14, the people had refused to enter the Promised Land on account of their fear of the giants. The prospect of remaining in the wilderness for 40 years until all that generation had died was too much for them to accept. They thought it was better to return to the land of Egypt and remain in bondage.

Centuries later, the priestly leaders in Jerusalem revolted against the One who was like Moses. In rejecting Jesus Christ, the priests led the people back to Egypt, the house of slavery. In refusing to recognize Jesus as the Lamb of God, that is, the Passover Lamb, they failed to apply His blood to their lintels (foreheads) and door posts (ears), and so they were unable to leave the house of slavery.

Jerusalem was their Egypt ([Rev. 11:8](#)), and without faith in Jesus Christ, they could not be begotten from above. Hence, the earthly Jerusalem was their mother, and they remained children of the flesh in the house of bondage in spiritual Egypt.

The Problem with Authority

The first problem with authority, as we noted in the case of the Moses church, was that the people wanted a man to represent them before God, rather than to have direct communication with God. The second problem is that men reject those that God has truly called as leaders, on the grounds that God has called all of us democratically.

Korah used God's invitation to all in Exodus 20 against Moses. He argued that "*all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is in their midst*" ([Num. 16:3](#)). The statement was true enough, but it failed to recognize the individual callings of God. A calling, regardless of how great or small it seems to be, gives men authority to fulfill those callings. When any person is functioning within his or her calling, all others, from the apostles to teachers, must submit to the word or action that is operating in the called one.

Moses and Aaron were functioning in their callings, but Korah wanted to replace Aaron, and apparently, the 250 leaders of the congregation wanted to replace Moses with their democracy. If they had succeeded, they would have been led by their own carnal minds, rather than by the Spirit of God. Every major issue would have been decided by a vote, with the yeas overruling the nays, and the traditions of men thus established by democratic votes.

God indeed wants to speak directly to all men. But God has also instituted authority in the earth. He instituted the five-fold ministry listed in [Eph. 4:11](#),

¹¹ And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers.

Hence, we must avoid *both problems* that men have with authority. We must avoid the authority *of men*, while at the same time submitting to the word of God that is *in men*. Whenever anyone speaks the word of God, even apostles and prophets must submit to the word of God, regardless of the vessel through whom it may come.

Moses and Aaron were truly called of God, but Korah and his companions treated the word as if it came only from their carnal minds. They did not recognize revelation when they heard it coming from Moses and Aaron, and so Korah was able to take advantage of the people when they grumbled over the divine judgment.

The Rebellion in Smyrna

The Smyrna church faced the same problem as seen in the Korah rebellion. It appeared in [Rev. 2:9](#), where God said that He had taken note of their tribulation, poverty, and "*the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not.*" The Jewish leaders in Jerusalem (and perhaps in a nearby synagogue in Smyrna) were the New Testament equivalent to the rebellious company of Korah in Numbers 16.

Moses was a type of Christ ([Deut. 18:18](#); [Acts 3:22](#)). So also was Aaron, for Aaron was the high priest of his order, while Jesus Christ was and is the High Priest of the Melchizedek Order ([Heb. 7:17](#)). Jesus, who was the One anointed and called to be both King and High Priest, was rejected by the leaders in Jerusalem, whose motive was to usurp His authority for themselves.

The message to the church in Smyrna contains no criticism, so it is clear that those representing the Korah rebellion were those from the local synagogue. There is a clear delineation between the true Jews who give genuine *praise* to God and the so-called Jews, who blasphemed God by their revolt against the King and their persecution of the church.

Strangely enough, after pointing out the problem in their midst, no solution is expressly mentioned. The church is told only that they, like Moses and Aaron, would have tribulation and persecution.

We can fill in the blanks, however, when we relate Smyrna's problem with the Korah rebellion. This is the advantage we have in knowing how the Old Covenant churches were repeated in the New Covenant churches. In fact, the things that happened in the Old Covenant churches gave warning to the New Covenant churches not to repeat the same patterns of the past. The only way to avoid such repetition was to fully adopt the New Covenant and its Mediator, leaving their Old Covenant "mother" and declaring Sarah as their new mother.

The Progression of Revelation

We can see a progressive revelation in going from Ephesus to Smyrna. The most notable progression is the two-part question of authority. The second is how leaving the church's first love brought the need for discipline and tribulation in the second church. Viewing it in this manner, it is clear that the purpose of this tribulation overall was to purify the church and to give it understanding of the purpose and proper use of authority.

The lesson is this: First, develop ears to hear what the Spirit is saying to the church. Second, do not reject genuine authority of men's callings, for God has raised them up to edify the church, as Paul says in [Eph. 4:12](#), [13](#) ...

¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

When we learn to discern the voice of God speaking through men and women—and any other source—then we can develop some measure of spiritual maturity. We ought not to hear the voice of men, but to hear the voice of God *in men*, whenever it speaks. We ought to recognize, too, that God does not tell any man everything, but distributes His revelation among the many. He does this in order to create the need to function as a body, so as to promote unity and love among the brethren.

This is the voice of the Spirit of Understanding, which is the particular Spirit of the seven Spirits of God given to Smyrna. Those that hear will understand what they hear, so that they may know the divine plan and live accordingly.

Chapter 14: Pergamum (313–529 A.D.)

Sixty miles north of Smyrna and about fifteen miles inland from the Aegean Sea was Pergamum. This city was called by various names: Pergamum, Pergamon, and Pergamos. It is not to be confused with modern Pergamon, which is on Cyprus.

Pergamum did not become an important city until 281 B.C. when it was enlarged and became the capital of the new Kingdom of Pergamum under the Attalid dynasty. They soon allied with Rome and became one of Rome's most loyal supporters.

At the end of the Third Macedonian War (171–168 B.C.), in which Pergamum supported Rome, the grateful Romans granted them all of their territory that they had conquered in Asia Minor from the Seleucids. This made Pergamum an important city, and it grew rapidly. Attalus III died without an heir in 133 B.C., and in order to prevent civil war, he willed his nation to Rome. Thereafter it was part of the Roman Empire and became Rome's capital for its entire province in Asia.

At its height, the city of Pergamum had a population of about 200,000. Its most well-known temple was to Asclapius, the god of healing. The city was also known for its great library, second only to the Great Library of Alexandria in Egypt. There were said to be about 500,000 documents or books in Alexandria, and about 200,000 in Pergamum.

When Pergamum began to build up its library, using papyrus (paper) from Egypt, the demand for papyrus exceeded the ability of Egypt to produce it. The rising price of Papyrus caused the people of Pergamum to use parchment from processed animal skins, which came to be called *pergamena*. Parchment had been in use in Asia in earlier times, but Pergamum refined the process and became famous for it.

The official headquarters for the proconsul of Rome in Asia was at Pergamum, although by the first century he lived in Ephesus. By this time the importance of Pergamum had declined, and the influence of Ephesus had increased. Even Smyrna seemed to be of greater importance than Pergamum by this time, on account of its proximity between Ephesus and Pergamum, and also because it was the end of the Royal Road from Susa in Persia.

The Pergamum Church Era

The Smyrna church era ended in 313 with Constantine's Edict of Milan, putting an end to Rome's persecutions. This began a new Christian era in the history of the Roman Empire. Constantine became a Christian just before conquering Rome in 312.

Constantine

Constantine's father, Constantius, was a Roman Caesar and a military general who had little interest in Christianity, and up to that point in time, Constantine had followed in his father's footsteps. Nonetheless, both father and son were favorable to Christians, no doubt being influenced by Helena, Constantine's mother, who was a strong Christian. For this reason, the churches were not persecuted in the western portion of the empire where they ruled. Another reason for their toleration is given by James Carroll, who tells us in his book, Constantine's Sword, p. 168,

"Under Diocletian, Christians were liable to be put to death almost everywhere in the empire, with the exception of the northwestern provinces over which Constantius ruled. This was ... because, as the general of an army made up in large part of tribal recruits who maintained loyalty to their own gods and cults, Constantius had learned the value of religious tolerance."

When Diocletian abdicated in 305 on account of mental illness, Constantius divorced Helena and married Maximian's daughter, Theodora, in order to be better connected to the Roman government. But the next year Constantius was taken ill and died in York. His son, Constantine, took his place at the age of about eighteen.

Meanwhile, Diocletian had also forced Maximian (his subordinate co-Caesar) to follow his example and resign his position. But Maximian soon reasserted his claim to rule. Constantine then treated Maximian as an unlawful usurper and began making plans to overthrow him.

Maximian quickly sued for peace, traveling to Trier to confer with Constantine. The young Constantine recognized Maximian as the senior Caesar (“Augustus”) and their unity was sealed by marriage. Constantine married Fausta, one of Maximian’s daughters.

However soon Maximian’s son Maxentius felt overlooked, so he staked his claim as emperor of the West. Maximian supported his son’s position at the expense of Constantine, and this brought about the conflict. Maximian was killed in the battle at Marseilles, and Constantine’s troops then marched toward Rome, which was fortified by Maxentius. In Italy, Constantine’s troops were far from home and demoralized. Carroll writes on page 171,

“But the night before the battle at the Milvian Bridge, on the Tiber, Constantine saw a cross in the sky, above the legend, In Hoc Signo Vinctus (“In This Sign, Conquer”). With the news of this vision, a signal of favor from the Christian God, Constantine’s troops rallied, went firmly into battle the next day, and won. Constantine himself threw Maxentius off the bridge into the Tiber, where he drowned. On the strength of that vision, and its fulfillment, the emperor became a Christian, so did his army, and, ultimately, so did the empire.”

Constantine then ruled the full western part of the Roman Empire. Though he still shared power for a few years with the caesars of the East, his Edict of Milan in 313 officially ended the persecutions and changed the course of both Roman and Church history.

Constantine has often been maligned unjustly as a pagan pretending to be a Christian, whose motives were evil. As a new believer, there is no doubt that he was yet carnal, for all of his training was about using military force to accomplish his goals.

There is no chance that he understood about being begotten by the Spirit. Rather, he became a religious person, devoted to Christianity *as a religion* in the only way he knew how. The good thing was that he ended the severe persecutions, and for this the Christians of his time were very grateful. The unintended consequence was that Constantine’s increasing favor upon the church began to give political power to bishops who were often as carnally minded as they were religious.

As time passed, the acceptance of creeds replaced faith in Christ Himself. Constantine’s desire to unify the empire was understandable as a secular emperor, but the church quickly adopted the same goal and utilized the same carnal, unloving methods to achieve a forced unity.

As a result, the third prophetic church in Revelation 2 began to arise, as the persecuted church (Smyrna) was replaced by Pergamum, or Pergamos.

The Meaning of Pergamos (or Pergamum)

Some say that Pergamos comes from the Greek word *pyrgos*, “tower, fortified place, height, elevation.” Others say it comes from a compound word, *peri*, “around, with respect to,” and *gamos*, “marriage.” The Greek term *gamos* is used in [Rev. 19:9](#),

⁹ And he said to me, “Write, ‘Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage [*gamos*] supper of the Lamb.’” And he said to me, “These are the true words of God.”

It seems to me that both derivations of the name *Pergamos* have an element of truth. The word *pyrgos* has come down to us in the term *burg* or *burgh*, which is an elevated place, physically or politically. A *burgomaster* is a principle magistrate or mayor of some European cities today. This derivation speaks of political power, which certainly describes the rise in power of the church from 313–529 A.D.

If we combine the ideas behind both *pyrgos* and *gamos*, we may view Pergamos' name as a prophecy "with respect to marriage to power." At any rate, this more clearly describes the church during this era of church history.

The Two Swords

[Revelation 2:12](#) says,

¹² And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: The One who has the sharp two-edged sword says this:

The message comes from the same Christ as the messages to the other churches, but in each case Christ goes by a different title to emphasize the peculiar problem and solution in each church. In this case, Christ is "*the One who has the sharp two-edged sword*." Why does He refer to Himself in this way?

[Hebrews 4:12](#) says,

¹² For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

The word of God itself is pictured as a sword. Paul calls it "*the sword of the Spirit*" ([Eph. 6:17](#)) in order to contrast it with physical swords. The problem was that the cross that Constantine saw was turned into a sword. The two covenants each have their own sword. Under the Old Covenant, the Promised Land was conquered by the power of the physical sword, because the people were not ready for the New Covenant at their first Pentecost at Mount Sinai. By refusing to hear the word of God ([Exodus 20:19](#)), they were left with mere physical swords to conquer the Canaanites.

Under the New Covenant, however, the 120 disciples in the upper room received the word of God at Pentecost in Acts 2. By this sword, which is sharper than any physical two-edged sword, they were instructed to conquer the world—not by threatening them with death, but by preaching the word. Believers were then baptized into a spiritual death-and-resurrection experience, according to the Great Commission that Jesus gave them before His departure. [Matt. 28:18–20](#) says,

¹⁸ And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Christ's introduction to His message to Pergamum implies that during this church era, the church would be using physical swords and carnal ways to fulfill the Great Commission. Thus, Constantine's vision of the sword, along with the word *In Hoc Signo Vinces* ("In This Sign, Conquer"), is the most important mindset characterizing the Pergamum era from 313–529 A.D.

If his vision was genuine, he should have interpreted it according to the New Covenant sword, rather than as an Old Covenant sword. But at the time, his focus was upon the coming battle, which involved physical swords. There was virtually no chance that he would change course. At best, as a new believer, he was yet carnally minded with no spiritual man to explain the difference between the two covenants.

So in His message to this church, Christ reminded them that He held the New Covenant sword, which is much sharper than physical swords. Physical swords may separate one's head from the body, but the word of God is sharp enough to separate soul from spirit, as well as the thoughts and intents of the heart.

The root problem is that the church did not truly understand the difference between the two covenants and their two swords. They did not distinguish between soul and spirit, and so they mistook soulish ("natural") inclinations for that

which was spiritual. In so doing, they became a soulish church that functioned on the power of the carnal, natural mind of the “old man” of Adam. They turned the church into a religion by the spirit of denominationalism, and membership became more important than a heart transformation. Relationship with Christ was subordinated to religious ritual and doctrine.

Satan’s Seat

[Revelation 2:13](#) says,

¹³ I know where you dwell, where Satan’s throne is; and you hold fast My name, and did not deny My faith, even in the days of Antipas, My witness, My faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.

Pergamum was known for its numerous temples, three of them dedicated to the Roman emperors themselves. The most significant, however, was the temple to Zeus, the king of the Greek gods. It had a great throne called the Great Altar of Zeus, which survived the ravages of history. In the late 1800’s it was purchased from the Ottoman Empire, dismantled, and shipped to Berlin, and reconstructed from 1910–1930.

From 1934–1937, Adolf Hitler constructed the Tribune at Zeppelin Field in Nuremberg to be used for Nazi rallies. The Pergamon Altar was used as the model, and Hitler’s pulpit was in the center of the Tribune. In 1948 the Soviets took the Altar to Leningrad, but it was returned in 1958. It seems that many have wanted Satan’s throne for themselves, knowing its history and its spiritual significance.

History of Satan’s Throne

Pergamum was not always “Satan’s throne.” From a prophetic standpoint, Babylon had been his throne, but after the fall of Babylon, some of the priests of Babylon transferred the throne to Pergamum. The head of the priestly order was known as Pontifex Maximus, Latin for “high priest.” A few decades before Christ was born, Julius Caesar attained that title as the high priest *in Pergamum*, and when he became the Caesar of Rome, the title moved to Rome with him.

For the next 400 years the title Pontifex Maximus was passed down to all of the emperors of Rome until the time of Maximus III (383–388 A.D.). Then the emperors ceased to claim that title, and it was passed to the Roman bishops, who have used it to this day. As the time of the four beast empires gradually moved West, Satan’s throne moved west as well, finally settling in Rome—and ultimately, in the Roman church, which is the “little horn” extension of Imperial Rome.

The citizens of Pergamum were called “Temple-keepers of Asia.” Not only were there three temples dedicated to the Roman emperors, but there was also a temple to Athena and a temple/healing center called The Askalapion (dedicated to Askalapius, the serpent-god of healing).

Antipas, the Faithful Witness

[Rev. 2:13](#) speaks of Antipas in glowing terms. He was said to be the bishop of Pergamum who was martyred there in 92 A.D., just before John was exiled to Patmos. The priests of Pergamum were upset with Christians, because they denied the very foundations of Greek religion—that there were multiple gods. The pagan priests complained to the Roman governor that the prayers of Antipas were casting out their spirits from the city and destroying the worship of their gods.

The governor then ordered Antipas to offer sacrifice to the statue of the Roman emperor and to declare that the emperor was “lord and god.” He refused, of course, and so he was sentenced to be offered as a sacrifice on the great Altar of Zeus. At the height of the Altar was a hollow bronze bull, into which they used to place victims for sacrifice. They would heat up the bull, and as it became hot, the victims would groan and scream, and their voices would be heard

coming from the mouth of the bull. It seemed to the people that the sacrifice made the bull come alive. Antipas was thus martyred for his witness of Christ and the truth in 92 A.D.

Antipas as a Prophetic Type

The name Antipas is said to be derived from *anti*, “instead of, in place of” and *pater*, “father.” Hence, the name is translated, “like father.” (It does not mean “against or in opposition to father.”)

No doubt “like father” is the primary meaning of the name, and it suggests that this faithful witness was like his heavenly Father. In other words, he was one of the Amen people, a double witness on earth of his heavenly Father in his words and in his deeds.

However, the Greek word *pas* (as in Anti-*pas*) means “all.” It is used in many places, including [Rom. 11:32](#),

³² For God has shut up all [*pas*] in disobedience, that He might show mercy to all [*pas*].

Again, [1 Tim. 4:9](#), [10](#) says,

⁹ It is a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance. ¹⁰ For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all [*pas*] men, especially of believers.

If we consider *pas* to be the derivation of the last part of the name *Antipas*, we may again see a doubly prophetic meaning, similar to what we saw in the name Pergamum (or *Pergamos*).

Interpreting Antipas in this second manner, we may view him as representing “all” in a universal sense. He is both “like Father” and “like all.” In representing the universal all, his martyrdom becomes symbolic of the death of the doctrine of Universal Reconciliation that occurred in the year 400 during the Pergamum era (313–529).

Universal Reconciliation

Up to the year 400 A.D., the teaching of Universal Reconciliation was both common and “normal” in the church, at least in the main influential centers of Christian thought. Divergence of opinion began to rise as early as the year 203, when two influential Christians, Clement and Tertullian, took opposite positions on the nature of divine judgment. In that year, Tertullian, the Christian Roman lawyer, wrote:

“How I shall admire, how laugh, how rejoice, how exult, when I behold so many kings... groaning in the lowest abyss of darkness, so many magistrates who persecuted the name of the Lord, liquefying in fiercer flames than they ever kindled against Christians; so many sage philosophers blushing in raging fire.” (de Spectaculis, 30)

His views of a literal burning hell were later adopted by the Roman church. But at the same time (203 A.D.), Clement of Alexandria wrote:

“God does not wreak vengeance, for vengeance is to return evil for evil, and God punishes only with an eye to the good.” (Stromata VII, 26)

Again, in commenting on [1 Tim. 4:9–11](#), Clement wrote:

“And how is He Savior and Lord, if not the Savior and Lord of all? But He is the Savior of those who have believed...and the Lord of those who have not believed...for all things are arranged with a view to the salvation of the Universe by the Lord of the Universe, both generally and particularly... But necessary corrections, through the goodness of the great Overseeing Judge, both by the attendant angels, and through various preliminary judgments, or through the Great and Final Judgment, compel egregious sinners to repent.”

Clement writes further,

“We say that the fire purifies not the flesh but sinful souls, not an all-devouring vulgar fire, but the ‘wise fire’ as we call it, the fire that ‘pierceth the soul’ which passes through it.” (Stromata VII, 6).

Again, he says,

“Fire is conceived of as a beneficent and strong power, destroying what is base, preserving what is good; therefore this fire is called ‘wise’ by the Prophets.” (Ecl. Proph. XXV, 4)

Clement wrote these things during the time of Origen, who was the first great theologian of the church in his day. But Origen did not convert people to his way of thinking, as much as he expressed more eloquently the most common premise of the church—that God would save all men in the end, and that the fiery judgment was designed to “correct” men and “compel egregious sinners to repent.”

Tertullian, however, took the opposite position, though his was a minority view (at the time). Clement of Alexandria did not derive his position from Egyptian culture that surrounded him. Egyptian religion specialized in teaching about a burning hell. Jaques le Goff wrote in his book, The Birth of Purgatory, pp. 19, 20,

“The Egyptian Hell was particularly impressive and highly refined ... Confinement and imprisonment played an important role. The tortures were bloody, and punishment by fire was frequent and terrifying ... When it came to the topography of Hell, the Egyptian imagination knew no limits ... Intermediate states of phases in the other-worldly process of purification did not exist.”

On page 53, Jaques le Goff also informs us of the contrast between the Egyptian view of divine punishment and that of the early Christians, writing,

“From the Old Testament, Clement and Origen took the notion that fire is a divine instrument, and from the New Testament the idea of baptism by fire (from the Gospels) and the idea of a purificatory trial after death (from Paul).” (The Birth of Purgatory, p. 53)

The standard Christian view, held by the vast majority of Christians—especially among the seven churches of Asia, along with those of Palestine and Alexandria—was that the “lake of fire” was not a literal torture pit, but a baptism of the Holy Spirit and “fire.” This view was taught by virtually all of the great church fathers through the fourth century, including Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyassa, two of the greatest theologians in the late fourth century. It was even taught by Jerome until the great controversy erupted in the year 400 A.D.

The Controversy

The controversy came about when a rich widow in Alexandria wanted to donate money to support poor widows. Knowing that Theophilus, the bishop of Alexandria, was more interested in buildings than in poor women, she gave the money secretly to Isidorus, the superintendent of the almshouse for the Alexandrian church. But one cannot spend much money without the truth being known. Theophilus went into a rage and banished Isidorus with false accusations.

Isidorus fled to the desert among Nitrian monks. Theophilus sent troops to invade the monks, burn their monasteries, and torture those who refused to deliver Isidorus into his hands. The Christians in Alexandria were horrified. Eighty of the Nitrian monks escaped and fled to Constantinople, where they appealed to the bishop, John Chrysostom.

A hearing was convened, and Theophilus was summoned. However, by subtle plotting, Theophilus was able to depose John and drive him into exile, where he soon died.

This political controversy spilled over into the doctrinal arena. Theophilus banned the writings of Isidorus, who had been writing a tribute to Origen called *Love of the Beautiful*. Because the book centered largely on Universal

Reconciliation, Theophilus suddenly changed his view to teach eternal torment and condemned Universal Reconciliation as heresy. Up to that point, Universal Reconciliation had been taught since Thomas founded the church in Alexandria.

During the controversy, Jerome, bishop of Bethlehem, wrote to the bishop of Rome, asking him which position to take. The Roman pontiff told him to take the position of eternal torment. Jerome then began to teach eternal torment, whereas up to then he had taught Universal Reconciliation. Jerome, for all his scholarship, was a bitter and vindictive man, visible to all by his attacks upon Rufinus. Now Jerome found a new enemy and “lost all feeling of decency and veracity” (Hans von Campenhausen, The Fathers of the Latin Church, p. 178).

Even so, Universal Reconciliation remained the dominant view for a long time. Church bishops found it necessary to condemn Origen in the Fifth General Council in 553 A.D., even though Origen had taught what his predecessors in Alexandria had believed since that church’s founding in the first century.

Strangely enough, the Church Councils did not oppose Origen’s teaching on Universal Reconciliation, but his belief that Satan and his angels would also be reconciled in the end. But as time passed, the condemnation was broadened to include the idea of God being the Savior of all men—while at the same time eulogizing some of the most well-known and beloved doctors of the church, such as the two Gregory’s. Perhaps the most significant condemnation came from the Emperor Justinian (527–565) in his Anathema IX. It read,

“If anyone says or thinks that the punishment of demons and of impious men is only temporary, and will one day have an end, and that a restoration will take place of demons and of impious men, let him be anathema.”

It is fitting, perhaps, that Justinian would condemn the biblical teaching of Universal Reconciliation as mandated by the law of Jubilee. Justinian was the emperor who officially brought an end to the Pergamum era and established the beginning of the Thyatira era (529–1517 A.D.). His greatest projects were the new calendar and the new Roman (Church) Law, which began the time of the “little horn.”

For a longer study on the history of Universal Reconciliation and how it was rejected by the church, see my booklet, [A Short History of Universal Reconciliation](#).

The point is that the martyrdom of Antipas, prophesied to the church of Pergamum, can be seen as a type of the death of Universal Reconciliation, which was probably the most significant doctrinal controversy during the prophetic Pergamum era (313–529).

The Counsel of Balaam

[Rev. 2:14](#) criticizes the church of Pergamum, saying,

¹⁴ But I have a few things against you, because you have there some who hold the teaching of Balaam, who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit acts of immorality.

The Old Covenant church corresponding to Pergamum is the Balaam church in the time of Moses. For this reason, we find that Pergamum had its own Balaam teachers in its midst. Of course, it is hardly likely that those teachers would have claimed Balaam as their mentor. But the One holding the two-edged sword was able to discern the thoughts and intentions of their hearts.

Balaam was a prophet who desired power and money. His story is recorded in Numbers 22–24. The king of Moab was terrified of the advancing Israelites, so he and the elders of Midian hired the prophet Balaam to curse Israel ([Num. 22:6](#)). Balaam asked God for permission to curse Israel (verses 10, 11), but God told him, “*you shall not curse the people, for they are blessed*” (verse 12).

This should have been sufficient, but Balaam desired the favor of Balak, king of Moab. So when the king offered him greater rewards, Balaam again asked God if he could curse Israel ([Num. 22:19](#)). God told him that he could go with Balak's men, but that he could only speak the words that God gave him. Balaam then did so, "*but God was angry because he was going*" ([Num. 22:22](#)). No doubt God's anger was directed against Balaam's motive, for he yet hoped to curse Israel and gain favor with Balak.

The angel of the Lord then stood in the path with a drawn sword. Balaam's donkey saw the angel, but Balaam did not. The donkey turned off the path, and Balaam became angry and began to beat the donkey. Finally, the Lord opened the donkey's mouth, and the donkey became the first in history to speak in tongues ([Num. 22:28](#)).

Balaam then argued with the donkey before realizing that the donkey had saved his life. The prophet finally confessed his sin ([Num. 22:34](#)). He confessed his sin of not seeing the angel, but he did not confess his real sin—that his desire was not God's desire. He was misusing his prophetic gift to establish things that were not the will of God.

This is a Pentecostal story that pictures a donkey being ridden by a prophet with carnal motives. In Scripture, donkeys represent Pentecostals, while horses represent Overcomers of the feast of Tabernacles. (See my book, [The Wheat and Asses of Pentecost](#).) The story specifically applies to the church of Pergamum, where, in John's day, there were prophets who followed the example of Balaam. These prophets should have listened to their "donkeys" (spirit-filled believers).

In the end, because Balaam was prevented from cursing Israel (and could only bless Israel), he counseled King Balak to take a different tactic. He told Balak to tempt Israel to sin by enticing them into immoral behavior. [Num. 25:1–3](#) says,

¹ While Israel remained at Shittim, the people began to play the harlot with the daughters of Moab. ² For they invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. ³ So Israel joined themselves to Baal of Peor, and the Lord was angry against Israel.

As a result, God instructed Israel to destroy the Moabites and Midianites, and in the battle, Balaam was also killed ([Num. 31:8](#)). We then read in [Num. 31:16](#),

¹⁶ Behold, these caused the sons of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to trespass against the Lord in the matter of Peor, so the plague was among the congregation of the Lord.

Here we are told that it was Balaam's idea to corrupt Israel through immorality. Balaam understood that this was the only way to bring God's curse upon Israel.

The Pergamum Church Adopts Balaam's Counsel

It appears that the same counsel of Balaam had surfaced in the church of Pergamum. We do not know any details insofar as that individual church was concerned. More important, however, was how it affected the church in the Pergamum era from 313–529 A.D. There we find the spirit of Balaam manifesting in church history.

During the Smyrna period of persecution, Rome tried to curse the church, but it only grew faster. So a different tactic was taken. Rome (i.e., Constantine) blessed the church, but there were carnally-minded church leaders who set out to unite with pagans in the attempt to convert them to the Christian religion. In this way they repeated the story of Balaam. But instead of pagans being converted to Christ, the Christian religion began to adopt pagan gods and their practices. Pagan temples were converted to Christian churches, pagan gods were given the names of Christian saints, pagan statues were renamed, and pagan holidays were Christianized. Statues of Persephone were adopted as portrayals of Mary.

Under Constantine and his successors, it was politically advantageous to be a Christian, and to become a bishop in large cities meant having great power and wealth. Soon ambitious men were drawn into the ministry for the wrong

motives. The teaching (or counsel) of Balaam was successful in seducing the church to forsake the word of the Lord. Christian leaders became increasingly carnal over the centuries, and idolatry took firm root, disguised as images of Christ, Mary, and the saints.

The counsel of Balaam was to induce Israelite men to engage in immoral behavior with the Midianite women if they would only bow to Baal-Peor. The tactic worked well, but 24,000 Israelites “*died by the plague*” ([Num. 25:9](#)) when God judged that nation.

The marriage with paganism in the time of Moses was repeated in the era of the Church of Pergamum. This lends support to the view that Pergamum (or Pergamos) has to do with *gamos*, “marriage.” It is proven by the outworking of prophecy itself.

The Spirit of Counsel

The message to the church at Pergamum came from the Spirit of Counsel, one of the seven Spirits of the Lord. The Spirit of Counsel was meant to counteract the counsel of Balaam. So the message to the church at Pergamum counseled the believers not to take heed to those “*who hold the teaching of Balaam*” ([Rev. 2:14](#)).

The Spirit of Counsel also advised the church to refrain from eating things sacrificed to idols ([Rev. 2:14](#)). Israel had done this while committing fornication with the Moabite women, as we read in [Num. 25:2](#),

² For they invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods.

This was prohibited in the law in [Exodus 34:15](#),

¹⁵ lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land and they play the harlot with their gods, and sacrifice to their gods, and someone invite you to eat of his sacrifice.

In [Acts 15:29](#) at the first Church Counsel, it was decided ...

²⁹ that you abstain from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things strangled and from fornication ...

It was probably for this reason that many believers thought it was a sin to eat meat that was being offered in the marketplace. The temples usually had far more sacrifices than the priests could eat, and so much of the meat was sold at the meat market in order to raise money for the temples. The question was whether it was lawful for a Christian to buy this meat and to eat it.

Paul did not believe that eating such meat constituted playing the harlot with other gods or making covenants with people worshiping foreign gods. It would have been a different matter if the people had gone to the temple with pagan friends to bow to other gods and eat a fellowship meal with them.

Hence, when Paul discusses Christian communion, he says in [1 Cor. 10:18–21](#),

¹⁸ Look at the nation of Israel; are not those who eat the sacrifices sharers in the altar? ¹⁹ What do I mean then? That a thing sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? ²⁰ No, but I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, and not to God; and I do not want you to become sharers in demons. ²¹ You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons.

Nonetheless, buying meat in the meat market, even if sacrificed to idols earlier, was not a covenant-breaking act. To sacrifice meat to idols did nothing to the meat. The idols did not create those animals and therefore did not own them, for as verse 26 says, “*the earth is the Lord’s, and all it contains.*”

In other words, ignore the issue unless someone questions it, and if someone serves you meat that has been offered to idols, “*eat anything that is set before you without asking questions for conscience sake*” (vs. 27). The prohibition only applies if the meal is part of a pagan worship ceremony, for then it should be considered a false communion, or “*the table of demons.*”

Paul thus compares the Lord’s table with the table of demons. The Lord’s table is where we eat and drink Christ’s flesh and blood, according to the spiritual principle in [John 6:54](#). Conversely, to eat at the table of demons is to eat and drink the flesh and blood of a false god or a false messiah. Since we are what we eat (and assimilate), it is evident that we ought not to become the manifestation of demonic activity, but rather to become the living word of Christ.

This, then, is the meaning of the prohibition given by the Spirit of Counsel in [Rev. 2:14](#). It is connected to the story of Balaam. The church was counseled to refrain from doing all that the Israelites did in joining with the daughters of Midian in their worship of Baal-Peor.

[Revelation 2:15](#) says also,

¹⁵ Thus you also have some who in the same way hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans.

Since this was already explained in our study of the Ephesus church, we will refrain from further comment, except to say that the same problem was found in the church at Pergamum. From a prophetic, historical standpoint, the seeds of Nicolaitan doctrine (lording over the laity) began in the first church era from 33–67 A.D., but by the time of the Pergamum era (313–529) it developed more fully as the church hierarchy rose to power.

God Threatens to Make War on the Church

[Revelation 2:16](#) says,

¹⁶ Repent therefore; or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth.

Even as God brought a plague upon Israel for their fornication with the Moabites, so also God threatened the Pergamum church with war, unless they repented. The overcomers repented; the rest of the church did not. It seems significant that the great controversy over Universal Reconciliation should begin in the year 400, and just ten years later, Rome was sacked by Alaric the Goth, which began a series of divine judgments involving war.

This traumatic event occurred just 30 years after the emperor Theodosius had made Christianity the state religion in 380 A.D. The sacking of Rome motivated Augustine, bishop of Hippo (near Carthage in North Africa), to write his influential book, *City of God*, explaining that Rome was not the New Jerusalem, but that the “City of God” was a spiritual city. In other words, the Goths had not overthrown the New Jerusalem.

While his basic premise was certainly true, the inescapable truth was that God allowed a Christian Empire to come under divine judgment. This can be explained only by God’s judgment upon the church for its apostasy, which most church officials probably did not comprehend, nor could they admit. The Spirit’s message to the church at Pergamum helps explain why God judged Rome.

As we will see later, Alaric the Goth, was the first judgment upon Christian Rome when the angel sounded the first trumpet in [Rev. 8:7](#).

The sword coming from God's mouth is His word—that is, the sword of the Spirit. God's tongue is likened to a fiery sword. The metaphor is pictured in physical terms, but it is actually a matter of His word. His word is law. His word is a decree from the court of heaven, which is then enforced by men on earth. In this case, God raised up the Goths to enforce divine judgment against "Christian Rome" for its apostasy. Alaric and his army used physical swords to sack Rome.

Hidden Manna

The rewards for overcoming are given in [Rev. 2:17](#),

¹⁷ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it.

The "hidden manna" is a reference to the pot of manna that Moses put into the Ark of the Covenant, along with the tables of the law and Aaron's rod. [Heb. 9:3, 4](#) says,

³ And behind the second veil there was a tabernacle, which is called the Holy of Holies, ⁴ having a golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden jar holding the manna, and Aaron's rod which budded, and the tables of the covenant.

Apparently, Moses set aside manna on the first day that the manna was sent from heaven, although the Ark itself had not yet been built. [Exodus 16:31–34](#) says,

³¹ And the house of Israel named it manna, and it was like coriander seed, white; and its taste was like wafers with honey. ³² Then Moses said, "This is what the Lord has commanded, 'Let an omerful of it be kept throughout your generations, that they may see the bread that I fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you out of the land of Egypt'." ³³ And Moses said to Aaron, "Take a jar and put an omerful of manna in it, and place it before the Lord, to be kept throughout your generations. ³⁴ As the Lord commanded Moses, so Aaron placed it before the Testimony, to be kept.

The manna was a type of the word of God, which the people were to eat daily so that they would grow spiritually. But the church in the wilderness under Moses soon became tired of manna, desiring meat (flesh) instead. The story is given in Numbers 11, where the people said in verse 6, "*there is nothing at all to look at except this manna.*"

Manna represents the word of God. The people wanted flesh to eat. The lesson here is that the church ought not to desire "flesh" to be dispensed from the pulpits. They should desire the true word of God, so that they may eat Christ's flesh and drink His blood, so to speak.

This is also represented in the bread and wine of Communion. The manna represented Christ Himself, for Jesus said in [John 6:48–51](#),

⁴⁸ I am the bread of life. ⁴⁹ Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. ⁵⁰ This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. ⁵¹ I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread also which I shall give for the life of the world is My flesh.

We can say, therefore, that the Israelites who rejected the manna in the wilderness were actually rejecting Christ without realizing it. In the New Testament church, we find a similar pattern. So the overcomers are given the "hidden manna," and this implies that the rest of the church, like the Israelite church in the wilderness, were *not* to receive this manna.

In other words, most of the church had rejected Christ in the same manner as the Israelites had done before them. Their leaders became increasingly religious and fleshly, and their message came not by revelation but by mental study of Scripture and tradition.

Whereas Moses and Aaron simply put manna in a jar and later placed it in the Ark, the Spirit of Counsel interpreted this as “hidden manna.” We are to understand that in the Pergamum era of the church, the word of God would be hidden from the church as a whole. Only the overcomers would have ears to hear what the Spirit says to the church. This implies that from 313–529 A.D. church policy openly began to forbid people to hear God for themselves.

Church Councils Replace Hearing God’s Voice

History shows that the church began to set up Church Councils to draw up official creeds to define true believers, rather than their love. The power to establish Church membership thus passed from God to men and came to reflect the values of religious men, rather than God’s values. No longer would true believers be defined by their enrollment in the heavenly records ([Heb. 12:23](#)). Now men would give themselves the right to record and erase men’s names on earth and then claim that heaven followed their lead.

The abuse of authority is in thinking that God gave the church authority to determine the will of God, rather than allowing the will of God to determine their own actions.

The same had been done in Judaism, where, for example, the temple priests cast out (or excommunicated) the man whom Jesus had healed of blindness ([John 9:34](#)). Those that were cast out were considered “sinners” and barred from worshiping in the temple. Those priests did not act according to the will of God, but thought that God had given them the authority to act according to their own understanding (i.e., the traditions of men).

The Pergamum church followed the lead of the Israelite church in the wilderness, not realizing that their abhorrence of manna had disqualified them from knowing the will of God.

The overcomers, however, are those who know the truth when they hear it. They love the word of God because they love Christ who is the Word made flesh. Whoever does not love the word of God does not really know Christ either. One must know the *written* word (Bible) by the *revelation* of the word. To put it in legal terms, one must eat clean spiritual food. One must eat (read or hear) the Scripture and then chew the cud ([Lev. 11:3](#)) in order to allow the Holy Spirit to turn it from flesh to spirit—or from a carnal, mental exercise into a revelation.

In this way the overcomers have access to the hidden manna that is in the Ark of the Covenant.

The White Stone

As we quoted earlier, [Rev. 2:17](#) also says that the overcomers will be given “*a white stone*.” When judges met to decide a case, it was customary to cast their ballots for guilt or innocence by using either a white stone or a black stone. A white stone signified innocence. A black stone indicated guilt.

Here God gives the overcomers a white stone. Once again, this implies that the church as a whole did NOT receive a white stone, but rather a black stone. The guilty verdict is seen in the warning to the church and the call to repentance ([Rev. 2:17](#)).

The New Name

The white stone given to an overcomer has “*a new name written on the stone*.” What name is this? We are not told, and the name is deliberately veiled, for “*no one knows but he who receives it*.”

I believe that it is the name of the New Creation Man that has been begotten in us by the word of God. It is one's spiritual name, the name that is recognized in the heavenly record as a son of God. Hence, [1 Peter 2:4](#), [5](#) calls us "living stones" in the spiritual temple that God is constructing. Each living stone is a piece of this temple ([Eph. 2:20](#)).

Our "old man," that is, the fleshly man, was named at birth. Even so, our "new man" also has a name that is known only by divine revelation. The purpose of a name is to reveal one's nature. Names were thus given and sometimes changed later to testify of a change in one's life. Stephen is the name given to my Adamic man, but the name of my Spirit-begotten New Creation Man is different. So it is with all of us, if indeed we have been begotten of God.

Each person is responsible to know who they are in Christ, their calling, their purpose on earth, and their destiny. They need to know their place in the body of Christ and their place in the temple of God. All of this is revealed in their new name.

I believe that our new name is revealed by the name of our angel (or angels), those who are assigned to minister through us to the world at large. Angels are messengers of the word of God. At least one angel is assigned to each of us, but in many cases they remain as external helpers or protectors. It is only when we absorb them, assimilate them, and become one with them that we take on the nature of our angel and begin to manifest the word (name) that is in that angel.

Book 2

A study of Revelation 2–5, from [Rev. 2:18](#) to the end of [Rev. 5](#).

Chapter 1: Thyatira (529–1517 A.D.)

In [Rev. 2:18](#) Christ introduces Himself to the church of Thyatira:

¹⁸ And to the angel of the church in Thyatira, write: The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet are like burnished bronze, says this:

Once again Christ is pictured in a unique way that is appropriate to deal with the problems in this church. We have already seen in [Rev. 1:14](#) and [15](#) that *“His eyes were like a flame of fire, and His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been caused to glow in a furnace.”* He is like a furnace, where we can see His inner fire through His eyes and see His glowing feet.

The fire indicates His character or nature ([Deut. 4:24](#)), and His bronze feet indicate divine judgment by means of that fire. The messages to Pergamum and Thyatira are given by a Judge, whereas the other messages focus upon His features, or attributes. Therefore, it is clear that Pergamum and Thyatira are singled out for divine judgment. We do not know the particular circumstances in those literal churches of the first century, but history tells us the nature and actions of the church as a whole during the eras that they represent.

[Rev. 2:19](#) begins the actual message to the church:

¹⁹ I know your deeds, and your love and faith and service and perseverance, and that your deeds of late are greater than at first.

The focus on the church’s “deeds” (works, actions) seems to suggest that works somehow have overshadowed faith. Obviously, there were two kinds of people in the church, good and bad. The good deeds of the one group are not the problem, but the deeds of the others are exposed as the message continues.

The Meaning of Thyatira

Thyatira was located on the road from Pergamum to Sardis. The experts are uncertain as to the meaning of Thyatira. Many believe, however, that it is a compound word that is derived from *thya*, “a female deity, goddess,” and *tyrannos*, “a tyrant or ruler.” Others say that the name comes from *thuo*, “to sacrifice” and therefore means “continual sacrifice.”

Once again, it is likely that both of these meanings are true and prophetic, even as Pergamum (or Pergamos) and Antipas had double meanings. In [Rev. 2:20](#) the meaning of Thyatira was no doubt being used to support the prophecy about “Jezebel.” The Old Testament Jezebel not only asserted herself as a tyrant goddess, but she also killed the prophets, offering them up, as it were, as a continual sacrifice.

Furthermore, Thyatira was the New Covenant church that ran parallel to the Jezebel church under the Old Covenant. For this reason, of course, the message to Thyatira references its Jezebel problem. The New Covenant church was troubled by the spirit of Jezebel, who came from Tyre. Thyatira was the New Tyre, built after the original city of Tyre was destroyed by Alexander the Great in 332 B.C.

Ethbaal, King-Priest of Tyre

In studying the Old Testament Balaam Church, which parallels the New Testament Church of Pergamos, we see that it involved the doctrine of Balaam who taught the king of Moab how to induce Israel to sin through intermarriage with the idolatrous Moabites. The intermarriage problem in Israel continued throughout their history in Canaan until it

finally reached its apex in the days of king Ahab of Israel. King Ahab married Jezebel, who was the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Zidonians ([1 Kings 16:31](#)). He ruled as a king-priest from the city of Tyre.

According to historians, Ethbaal was the high priest of Baal who had overthrown king Pheles of Tyre and replaced him as king-priest. Thus, Ethbaal was more than a mere follower of Baal. As high priest of the religion, he represented Baal on earth. As king, he ruled with temporal power as well. Hence, his name was actually a title: Eth-baal, one who rules with Baal, or by his authority, or in place of Baal. The name *Ethbaal* means “with, near, or together with Baal.”

In Roman terminology, he would be the Vicar of Baal. The kingdom of Tyre in the days of Jezebel was a religious kingdom of Baal on earth, and its high priest ruled supreme as king. This sheds much light on Ezekiel 28, which compares the beautiful city of Tyre to the Garden of Eden and compares Ethbaal, the prince of Tyre, to the tempter in Eden. In effect, in those days Tyre served as the anti-kingdom of God, ruled by Ethbaal, an antichrist type.

The prefix “anti-” means “in place of.” For example, [Matt. 2:22](#) tells us that Archelaus reigned in Judea *anti*, or *in place of*, his father Herod. In like manner, Ethbaal ruled Tyre in place of Baal himself. Likewise, because Ahab had married Jezebel, Ethbaal’s laws governed Israel in place of the laws of God. Even as the serpent in Eden successfully tempted Adam to sin, so also did Ethbaal tempt Ahab to sin in marrying Jezebel.

In the New Testament message to the Churches, we find that Pergamos, “married to power,” represents the unlawful marriage between the Church and paganism, or Ahab and Jezebel. The next Church era, that of Thyatira, gives us *the results* of that marriage. In the Church’s rise to power on a temporal plane over the kings of the earth, it formed an antichrist system. That is, the popes claimed to rule *in place of* Christ, calling themselves the Vicars of Christ. There is a direct parallel in this to King Ahab ruling Israel in place of Ethbaal, even as Ethbaal ruled in place of Baal as his vicar.

The name of Jezebel’s father prophesies to us of the underlying problem in the Thyatira Church era from 529 to 1517 A.D. King Ahab of Israel married Jezebel, and in so doing, he joined himself with her god, Baal. Thus, he placed Israel under the power of the kingdom of Baal on earth.

This set the stage for an era in which Ethbaal—through his daughter Jezebel—was the real power behind Israel’s monarchy. Ahab was a mere king; Ethbaal was a king of kings to all who worshipped Baal. In Israel, the laws of Baal replaced the laws of God as given by Moses, and it became unlawful to think differently. Jezebel then persecuted the true prophets of God and the Remnant of Grace during the days of Elijah ([1 Kings 18:13](#)).

The History of Tyre

King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon conquered the city of Tyre in 572 B.C., shortly after he conquered Jerusalem. This was no easy task, for Tyre had a wall that was 150 feet high. In fact, it took thirteen years for Babylon to subdue the city. The Hebrew name for Tyre is *Tsur*, which literally means *rock* or *castle*, no doubt referring to its great strength as a fortified city.

The city of Tyre was a seaport divided into two parts. The main part of the city was built along the shore of the Mediterranean Sea in what is now Lebanon. The second section of the city was built upon a small island just offshore. When Nebuchadnezzar conquered the main part of Tyre, the people escaped to the island and remained free, for the sea itself provided a natural barrier against the Babylonian army, who did not have a navy to lay siege to the island.

Nearly three centuries later, Alexander the Great ran into the same problem. However, he decided to use the ruins of the old city to connect the island with the mainland. They hauled the rocks and columns from all the destroyed buildings and threw them into the sea. So much material was required that they literally scraped the dust from the bedrock of the old city and threw it into the sea. Only then were they able to conquer the island city of Tyre.

In this conquest, Alexander the Great fulfilled the prophecy of [Ezekiel 26:4, 5](#).

⁴ And they will destroy the walls of Tyre, and break down her towers; and I will scrape her debris from her and make her a bare rock. ⁵ She will be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea, for I have spoken, declares the Lord God, and she will become spoil for the nations.

Today this causeway is used by fishermen to dry or repair their nets, as the prophet said.

One of Alexander's four generals, Seleucus, took part in the conquest of Tyre in 332 B.C. After Alexander died in 323 B.C., the empire was divided among the four generals. Seleucus took control of Asia Minor and Babylon. In 312 B.C. he established the so-called Seleucid (Greek) calendar which later was used in dating events in the books of the Maccabees. Shortly before he died in 280 B.C., he founded the city of Thyatira—*New Tyre*.

As we said earlier, the name *Tyre* is, in Hebrew, the word *Tsur*, which means “rock” and refers to its strength as a fortress. According to The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, the name *Thyatira* means “the castle of Thya.” In other words, they take *tira* to mean “castle”—no doubt based upon its literal meaning as a rock or stronghold. This is supported by the fact that in later times it was renamed Ak-Hissar, which in Turkish means “white castle.”

Hissar is the Turkish equivalent to the Hebrew name *Hazor* found in Joshua 11. Hazor was the leading city of the northern part of Canaan. There is some debate as to whether Joshua conquered the city of Hazor, or if, in fact, he conquered Tyre. Hazor may be *Ha-Tsur*, “the rock.” At any rate, Strong's concordance tells us that the name Hazor comes from the Hebrew word *chatsar*, which means “to surround with a stockade.” (See Strong's #2690.) In other words, it is a castle, a walled fortress.

Thus, the Turkish word for castle (*Hissar*) is the same as the Hebrew word for castle (*Hazor*). Both are closely related to *Ha-Tsur*, “the rock,” and *Tsur* is the city of Tyre. And yet Hassar is the modern name for the city of Thyatira as well. The connections are obvious.

Putting all these facts together, we can say that there is a spiritual connection and very possibly a physical connection between the city of Tyre and the city of Thya-TIRA. Both names incorporate the concept of a rock, fortress, or castle. Yet there are other striking similarities. Both cities worshipped the sun-god and a female counterpart. Both cities were famous for their purple dye and had trade unions, or guilds, to protect themselves from competitors.

Tyre and Thyatira Known for Purple Dye

In comparing Tyre with the city of Thyatira, it is evident that Seleucus intended Thyatira to be like a second Tyre. Like Tyre, Thyatira was noted for its production of purple dye. We see this in Acts 16, where Lydia, one of Paul's converts in Philippi, was in that city on business selling purple dye, cloth, or robes from her home town of Thyatira ([Acts 16:14](#)). So their main commercial activity was still the same.

Lydia's conversion perhaps foreshadows prophetically the Thyatira Church, which would be in need of a fresh conversion. Previous to meeting Paul, Lydia apparently had been a convert to Judaism, for it is said that she “*worshipped God*.” Nonetheless, she was in need of baptism into Christ ([Acts 16:15](#)) in order to give her a full revelation of the Truth.

So also with the Church of Thyatira from 529 to 1517 A.D. While many of the people certainly attempted to worship God in the best way they knew, it is plain that their religious experience was in need of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. The right to know Him personally had been taken from them in the rush to establish unity and single-mindedness in submission to “orthodox” Christian doctrine.

Tyre and Thyatira Had Similar Religions

We also can compare the religions of Tyre and Thyatira. The city of Tyre worshipped Baal, which was the name of their sun-god. The city of Thyatira in ancient times had a temple to the ancient Lydian sun-god named *Tyrimnos*. The

first part of his name seems to connect him with the city of Tyre, as well as with the Greek word *Tyrannos*, “tyrant, or sovereign ruler.”

Ashtoreth was the goddess of the Zidonians ([1 Kings 11:33](#)). She was the female consort for Baal and represented the earth, even as Baal was the sun-god. So also we find that the city of Thyatira had a goddess to go with their sun-god. According to The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia,

“Another temple at Thyatira was dedicated to Sambethe, and at this shrine was a prophetess, by some supposed to represent the Jezebel of [Rev. 2:20](#), who uttered the sayings which this deity would impart to the worshippers.”

In [Rev. 2:20](#) the Church of Thyatira is condemned for allowing ...

²⁰ ... the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray, so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.

Thus, we see that there was both a male figure, the sun-god named **Tyrimnos**, and a goddess named **Sambethe** in the city of Thyatira. It would appear that Sambethe is the “**Thya-**,” while Tyrimnos is the “**Tyra-**.” Putting them together, as if to manifest the marriage of the god and goddess, they form the name of Thyatira.

As the Pergamum era closed, a new emperor arose in the Christian Roman Empire. It may surprise many to learn that since the time of Constantine, the capital of the empire was in Constantinople, which they often called “New Rome.” Today it is known as Istanbul.

The new emperor was Justinian. He had been legally adopted by the previous emperor, Justin, and was made co-emperor on April 4, 527 A.D. When Justin died on the first of August of that year, Justinian became sole emperor.

Justinian’s wife was Theodora, an actress, exotic dancer (“stripper”), and prostitute in her early years, having had at least one child out of wedlock. She soon became Justinian’s mistress. Later, she was converted to a non-Orthodox sect known as the Monophysites. This super-spiritual sect believed that Jesus had only a divine nature and no human nature at all. She married Justinian in 525, and two years later, when Justinian became the sole emperor (Augustus), she became the empress (Augusta). The Britannica says of her,

“Theodora exercised considerable influence, and though she was never coregent, her superior intelligence and deft handling of political affairs caused many to think that it was she, rather than Justinian, who ruled Byzantium. Her name is mentioned in nearly all the laws passed during that period. She received foreign envoys and corresponded with foreign rulers, functions usually reserved for the emperor.”

On page 62 of [A Short History of Byzantium](#), we read further,

“At Justinian’s insistence she was to reign at his side, taking decisions and giving him the benefit of her counsel in all the highest affairs of state.”

Hence, the Thyatira era began with Justinian and Theodora, who together provided the link to the Old Covenant church, which I call the Jezebel church. Perhaps more properly it should be called the church of Ahab and Jezebel, except that [Rev. 2:20](#) mentions only Jezebel.

Whether or not we are to consider Theodora’s adherence to Monophysitism to be the equivalent to Jezebel’s adherence to the religion of Baal is not clear. The message to the church of Thyatira focuses upon the subject of immorality. This seems to point out Theodora’s immorality, at least in her early life.

Procopius, the historian of the day, was commissioned to write a book about Justinian and Theodora called [Buildings of Justinian](#), in which the two were presented in a flattering manner as a pious couple. This was written while Justinian

The Revelation: Book 2 - Chapter 1: Thyatira (529–1517 A.D.)

was yet alive. After Justinian had died, he wrote another book called Secret History, in which he presented them in a more negative light. The Wikipedia's article on *Theodora* tells us of this book,

“Justinian is depicted as cruel, venal, prodigal and incompetent; as for Theodora, the reader is treated to a detailed and titillating portrayal of vulgarity and insatiable lust, combined with shrewish and calculating mean-spiritedness ... ”

It is probable that Procopius' first book was designed to flatter the couple, while the second, written in secret, was closer to the truth. If so, the two come closer to King Ahab and Jezebel. This book, however, was not published for another thousand years.

Changing the Calendar and the Roman Legal System

When Justinian became co-regent in 525, his first major project was to change the calendar, which had been devised by Dionysius Exiguus. Up to this time, the Roman calendar's reference point (Year One) was the date of the founding of Rome (753 B.C.). Hence, Justinian became co-regent in the Roman year 1278 A.U.C. (*ab urbe condita*), but he changed the calendar so that it began with the birth of Christ. By the new calendar, then, he became emperor in 527 A.D. (*anno domini*, “in the year of our Lord”).

Justinian's second great project was to streamline and change the laws of the empire to reflect the values of the church. Roman laws had been accumulating for more than 1200 years. They were often contradictory or antiquated. Something needed to be done, and Justinian wanted to take the best of the old Roman laws, retaining those that reflected the values of the church and eliminate those that reflected pagan values. Will Durant tells us in his book, The Age of Faith, p. 111,

“the whole vast body of Roman law had become an empirical accumulation, rather than a logical code.”

According to The Catholic Encyclopedia, under the heading, “Justinian I,”

“The most enduring work of Justinian was his codification of the laws.”

The *Codex Constitutionum*, as it was called, was produced in 529 A.D. The *Pandectae*, or *Digest*, was produced in 530 along with the *Institutes* (i.e., student manuals). The final revisions were published in 534, known as the *Corpus Juris Civilis* with additions called *Authentic*. The new laws came into effect on December 30, 534 A.D.

The new Codex merged civil law with religious law. Will Durant tells us,

“This Code ... enacted orthodox Christianity into law ... All ecclesiastical, like all civil, law was to emanate from the throne.” (The Age of Faith, p. 112)

The Catholic Encyclopedia says of these new laws:

“It would be difficult to exaggerate the importance of this ‘Corpus.’ It is the basis of all canon law (ecclesia vivet romana) and the basis of civil law in every civilized country.”

In other words, Justinian's Corpus is to this day the basis of law in Europe and the western “Christian” nations. [Dan. 7:25](#) tells us the importance of Justinian's calendar and alteration of Roman law. The prophet identifies Justinian's actions as the start of the “little horn” era, when Religious Rome essentially replaced Imperial Rome. The prophet says, “*he will intend to make alterations in times and in law.*” The “*alteration in times*” was Justinian's change in the Roman calendar. The alteration “*in law*” was his *Corpus Juris Civilis*.

The prophet also tells us that the “little horn” was to flourish for “*a time, times, and half a time*” ([Dan. 7:25](#)). A prophetic “time” is 360 days in short-term prophecy and 360 years in long-term prophecy. In this case, it prophesies The Revelation: Book 2 - Chapter 1: Thyatira (529–1517 A.D.)

long-term, and 3½ “times” is therefore a period of 1,260 years. The time frame in question is from 529–534 A.D. to 1789–1794 A.D., ending with the French Revolution.

The time of the “little horn” takes us past the church era of Thyatira, which ends in 1517. It is therefore beyond our current scope of interest. Nonetheless, it is important to realize that the start of the Thyatira era coincides with the “little horn” of [Dan. 7:25](#). The little horn of Daniel 7 arose during the Thyatira era of the Jezebel church.

Jezebel Persecutes the Prophets

As we have already shown, the name Thyatira suggests the church’s rise in temporal power and is connected to the city of Tyre as well. Tyre was the home town of Jezebel before she married King Ahab of Israel. Jezebel hated the prophets and all true believers in the God of Scripture. She persecuted them mercilessly in order to turn Israel into a nation of Baal worshipers.

During that persecution, King Ahab’s Chief of Staff, who was the head steward over the king’s household ([1 Kings 18:3](#)) was a believer in Yahweh who helped to support the underground church in his day. We read in [1 Kings 18:3, 4](#),

³ And Ahab called Obadiah who was over the household. (Now Obadiah feared the Lord greatly; ⁴ for it came about, when Jezebel destroyed the prophets of the Lord, that Obadiah took a hundred prophets and hid them by fifties in a cave, and provided them with bread and water.)

Later, the prophet Elijah had a showdown with Jezebel’s prophets of Baal. Her prophets were killed, and Jezebel then went on a rampage, vowing to execute Elijah himself. He fled to Mount Horeb and sat in the cave where Moses had first received the law ([1 Kings 19:8, 9](#)). Elijah was discouraged, complaining that he seemed to be the only believer left in Israel, even after his great victory at the showdown on Mount Carmel. Perhaps he thought that Obadiah had been found out and executed, along with the hundred prophets who had been hidden up to that point.

In his conversation with God, the prophet was told that there yet remained a remnant of 7,000 in Israel ([1 Kings 19:18](#)). Later, the Apostle Paul commented on this, relating those 7,000 to the remnant of grace under the New Covenant ([Rom. 11:4, 5](#)). It is this same remnant of grace that are the overcomers in the messages to the seven churches.

The distinction between the church and the overcomers is clear. Even as Jezebel had pressured the Israelites to commit spiritual fornication with other gods, so also was there the same problem in the church of Thyatira, seducing the people to commit spiritual fornication and leading God’s bond-servants astray ([Rev. 2:20](#)).

The leadership in the Thyatira era followed the lead of the Jezebel spirit, but the remnant of grace—the overcomers—remained true to God. Nonetheless, most of these true believers were hidden from view. It is not likely that many of them were church leaders.

Time to Repent

[Revelation 2:21](#) says of Jezebel,

²¹ And I gave her time to repent; and she does not want to repent of her immorality.

Seldom does God judge without first giving a grace period in which to repent. In this case no specific length of time is specified, nor again with Queen Jezebel in Israel. Before studying the judgment upon Jezebel in the Thyatira church, let us look at her judgment in the Old Testament. In fact, to get the full impact of divine judgment, we must view Ahab and Jezebel together.

Usurping the Kingdom and its Fruit

The main sin of Ahab was that he stole the vineyard next door to his house. [1 Kings 21:1](#) says,

¹ Now it came about after these things that Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard which was in Jezreel beside the palace of Ahab king of Israel.

This property had been owned by Naboth, “fruits,” located in Jezreel, “God scatters; God sows.” Jezreel (*Yezreel*) is also a homonym of the name Israel (*Yisrael*). [Isaiah 5:7](#) tells us, “*For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel,*” so this, then, is a historical allegory of a wicked king stealing the vineyard and the fruits of the Kingdom.

Both Isaiah 5 and 1 Kings 21 are Scriptures that Jesus used as the basis of His parable in [Matt. 21:33–41](#). Jesus (Joshua) had planted a vineyard in Canaan, but those entrusted with working the land usurped it for themselves and refused to bring forth the fruits of the Kingdom.

Hence, the story in 1 Kings 21 tells how King Ahab, with the prodding of Jezebel, usurped Naboth’s vineyard and the fruits of the Kingdom. For this he was judged, for God sent Elijah to tell him in [1 Kings 21:21–24](#),

²¹ Behold, I will bring evil upon you, and will utterly sweep you away, and will cut off from Ahab every male, both bond and free in Israel; ²² and I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, because of the provocation with which you have provoked Me to anger, and because you have made Israel sin. ²³ And of Jezebel also has the Lord spoken, saying, “The dogs shall eat Jezebel in the district of Jezreel. ²⁴ The one belonging to Ahab, who dies in the city, the dogs shall eat, and the one who dies in the field the birds shall eat.”

The judgment upon Ahab correlates with the judgment that Jesus pronounced upon those who usurped the fruits of the Kingdom in His day. [Matt. 21:40, 41](#) says,

⁴⁰ Therefore when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vine-growers? ⁴¹ They said to Him, “He will bring those wretches to a wretched end, and will rent out the vineyard to other vine-growers, who will pay him the proceeds at the proper seasons.”

The “wretched end” describes Elijah’s judgment upon Ahab, where God vowed to utterly sweep him away. Elijah also said that the house of Ahab would be swept away even as what happened with two of his predecessors, Jeroboam and Baasha ([1 Kings 16:3, 4, 11, 12, 13](#)). When the Pharisees judged themselves in [Matt. 21:41](#), they did not realize that they were pronouncing the same judgment upon themselves that Elijah had pronounced against Ahab and Jezebel.

Furthermore, this judgment was decreed for the same reason—usurping the fruits of the Kingdom and denying these fruits to the Owner of the vineyard.

All of this implies that Jezebel in the Thyatira church had usurped the fruits of the Kingdom as well. The fruit God desires is the fruit of the Spirit ([Gal. 5:22, 23](#)). The problem is that the flesh constantly wars against the Spirit, as described in [Gal. 5:17](#),

¹⁷ For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.

In other words, the “old man” of flesh desires to usurp authority and replace the fruit of the Spirit with the fruit of the flesh—that is, “*the deeds of the flesh*” ([Gal. 5:19](#)).

Judgment upon Jezebel

[Revelation 2:22](#) says,

The Revelation: Book 2 - Chapter 1: Thyatira (529–1517 A.D.)

²² Behold, I will cast her upon a bed [*klena*] of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. ²³ And I will kill her children with pestilence; and all the churches will know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts; and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds.

The word for “bed” is *klena*, which means a bed (for sleeping) or a couch (for eating) or even a bier (to carry the dead). The Hebrew word *mittah* carries the same range of meaning. The NASB above adds the phrase “of sickness” to imply that the judgment of God was to afflict Jezebel with sickness so that she would be bed-ridden. That is the dominant meaning of the metaphor in the passage above, because Jezebel is portrayed as committing fornication on a bed, while her children will be killed by pestilence, or sickness.

However, the Spirit also uses this word to suggest eating a meal while reclining on a couch ([Ezekiel 23:41](#); [John 21:20](#)). Once we begin to relate this Jezebel with the wife of Ahab by the same name, we may see the *klena* or *mittah* in terms of reclining at a meal. [1 Kings 21:24](#) says,

²⁴ The one belonging to Ahab, who dies in the city, the dogs shall eat, and the one who dies in the field the birds shall eat.

This literally happened to Jezebel after she was killed. [2 Kings 9:35](#), [36](#) says of her,

³⁵ And they went to bury her, but they found no more of her than the skull and the feet and the palms of her hands. ³⁶ Therefore they returned and told him. And he said, “This is the word of the Lord, which He spoke by His servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, “In the property of Jezreel the dogs shall eat the flesh of Jezebel.”

The full prophecy shows that she was eaten by dogs and birds (vultures?). This event was a prophetic type that applied to all usurpers of the Kingdom, as well as a specific metaphor for the New Testament Jezebel.

The “Jezebel” of [Rev. 2:20](#) was a prophetic type of the greater “Jezebel” which emerges as the great harlot in [Rev. 17:1](#). She is the pretender bride, clothed in royal garb and riding a beast with seven heads and ten horns. Eventually, the beast turns on her in [Rev. 17:16](#),

¹⁶ And the ten horns which you saw, and the beast, these will hate the harlot and will make her desolate and naked, and will eat her flesh and will burn her up with fire.

The next verse tells us that “*God has put it in their hearts to execute His purpose,*” that is, for the beast to eat the harlot, even as Jezebel was eaten by the dogs at the end of her rule.

The message to the church of Thyatira draws upon the Old Testament story of Ahab and Jezebel in order to prophesy the state of the church during the Thyatira era (529–1517 A.D.). It shows that the church—like the Jewish leaders before it—would usurp the “vineyard” and replace the fruit of the Spirit with the deeds of the flesh.

For this reason, both were to receive similar judgments. What literally happened to Jezebel would be repeated on a symbolic level. Hence, in the end, at the second coming of Christ, we read in [Rev. 19:17](#), [18](#), and [21](#),

¹⁷ And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried out with a loud voice, saying to all the birds which fly in midheaven, “Come, assemble for the great supper of God; ¹⁸ in order that you may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of commanders and the flesh of mighty men and the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them and the flesh of all men, both free men and slaves, and small and great ... ” ²¹ ... and all the birds were filled with their flesh.

Here we find no mention of dogs, but only the birds eating the flesh. Whether there might be occasions where this is fulfilled literally or not, we cannot say. We do know, however, that it is a metaphor for the destruction of “the flesh,” so that all that remains is the fruit of the Spirit. The meal consumes the flesh.

In the metaphor, a “dog” can represent two opposite things: faithfulness and carnality. In the good sense, *Caleb* means “dog” in the sense of being a loyal, faithful friend. Caleb and Joshua were the two overcomers in their day, who had faith when the spies gave their report. In the evil sense, [Deut. 23:18](#) says,

¹⁸ You shall not bring the hire of a harlot or the wages of a dog into the house of the Lord your God for any votive offering, for both of these are an abomination to the Lord your God.

This refers to Canaanite worship in the groves, where prostitution was a religious act of purification before marriage. Some came to have sexual relations with a harlot of the opposite sex—and paid for the services as a donation to the pagan temple. Others came to have relations with the same sex as “dogs.” Homosexual behavior was considered to be the most depraved expression of carnality in biblical law. Hence, God’s sanctuary was to not to adopt the carnal practices of Canaanite religion, nor was it even to accept donations earned by such behavior.

Jezebel brought Baal worship into Israel when Ahab married her. Hence, the land was defiled and the fruit of the Kingdom was withheld from God.

Ruling by Immorality

The church during the Thyatira era gradually degenerated, morally speaking, under its carnal leadership. Many church historians (cardinals, archbishops, etc.) wrote about this, so it is not a secret, though it is no longer widely known. By the tenth century the church had degenerated so badly that the time was known as the Golden Age of Pornocracy (i.e., Ruled by Immorality). Many people, especially those living in Rome (who saw the corruption first-hand), became very cynical. They believed that the church had been established by Christ through Peter. They believed that it was the True Church, but they regretted that it was so.

All of this corruption was pictured in the prophetic message to the church of Thyatira, which had tolerated “Jezebel.” The church was not exempt from the judgment of God. A religious veneer on the outside could not hide their deeds from “*He who searches the minds and hearts*” ([Rev. 2:23](#)).

Nonetheless, God always left a remnant of grace, not only in Israel during the time of Elijah, but also in the literal church of Thyatira and the prophetic Thyatira church era.

Persecuting Heretics

The word “heretic” comes from a Greek word, *hireses*, meaning *to make a choice*. The word is translated “sect” five times. The Sadducees were a sect, *hireses* ([Acts 5:17](#)), as were the Pharisees ([Acts 15:5](#)). Whether or not they were “heretics” was, of course, a matter of opinion.

When men choose their own beliefs instead of believing Scripture, it is true heresy. However, in later history the Popes claimed that the decisions of Church Councils were the truth. Thus, a heretic came to be defined as anyone who disagreed with the creeds of a recognized Church Council, rather than Scripture itself. This was the problem in Jesus’ day in Judaism when the priests could not distinguish between the word of God and their “traditions of men.”

H. Grattan Guinness tells us on page 31 of his book, Romanism and the Reformation, that in the sixth century, Pope Pelagius said,

“Schism is an evil. Whoever is separated from the apostolic see is doubtless in schism. Do then what we often exhort. Take pains that they who presume to commit this sin be brought into custody ... Do not hesitate to compress men of this kind, and if he despise this, let him be crushed by the public powers.”

Guinness does not tell us if this was Pelagius I (557–560) or Pelagius II (577–590). Both were embroiled in schismatic times, so I have been unable to discover which Pope said these things. Again, Guinness says of Pope Damasus, who was an earlier pontiff from 366–384 A.D.,

“Pope Damasus, whose election to the pontificate was secured by a hundred and thirty-seven murders, authorizes persecution of those who speak against any of the holy canons, and adds, ‘It is permitted neither to think nor to speak differently from the Roman Church’ ... Whatever is short of absolute, unconditional surrender of all freedom of act or word, or even of thought and conscience, is heresy. Every evangelical Christian in the world is therefore, according to Roman canons, a heretic, and as such liable to ‘punishment’.” (pages 31, 32)

The Beginnings of Persecution

In the fourth century, when the Church first began coming to power, they normally broke fellowship with heretics and expelled them from the Church. Memories of torture and death were still too fresh from the Empire’s holocaust for the Church to adopt the same policy of persecution. But Cormenin tells us in his History of the Popes, Vol. 1, p. 105,

“After the death of [Pope] Felix, the intrigues for a successor were renewed. At this period the ambition of the priests had grown to be very great; liberty began to be banished from the elections, and those who had riches or powerful friends alone could hope to aspire to the episcopate.”

Pope Felix died in 529, just as the Thyatira Church era began. Within a few years, Pope Pelagius I [557–560] said,

“ ‘Do not listen,’ said he, ‘to the idle talk of timid men, who blame the church when it commands a persecution for the purpose of repressing error, in order to save souls. Schisms are violent evils, which must be cured by strong and terrible remedies; and Scripture and the canon authorize us to call in the aid of magistrates to compel schismatics to re-enter into the bosom of the church. Do, then, that which we have frequently asked from you; send to the emperor, well guarded, those who have separated themselves from the apostolic see. Have no fears for your eternal safety; the examples of the great saints will teach you that princes ought to punish heretics, not only by exile, but also by the confiscation of property, by severe imprisonment, and even by torture’.” (Cormenin, History of the Popes, Vol. I, page 118)

The Inquisition

In the 12th century the Church became alarmed by the resurgence of heresy among the Albigenses in southern France. This eventually led to the establishment of the Inquisition by Pope Gregory IX in 1231 A.D. It was not long before torture became the most popular method of the Inquisitors in stamping out heresy.

The Albigenses were dualists who believed that everything was a struggle between two gods: one good, the other evil. The good God was Jesus Christ, the God of light, goodness, and spirit; while the evil god, Satan, was the god of darkness, evil, and matter. They believed that Satan is the god of the Old Testament; while Jesus Christ is the God of the New Testament.

This belief had flourished for centuries along the Mediterranean ever since the Manicheans had preached it in the third century. It still has influence in various groups today, manifested primarily by men’s abhorrence of the Law or of Yahweh Himself. It is also seen in the way the concept of resurrection from the dead has been undermined. (See our booklet, [The Purpose of Resurrection](#).)

And so, we agree that the Albigenses were wrong in their doctrines and concepts of God. However, we believe that the torture and murder sanctioned by the Inquisition was not the answer to the problem. If they had been left alone to suffer under the injustices of their own antinomian society, they would have either learned by themselves that imperfect men need laws for their protection ([1 Tim. 1:9](#)), or else they would have lost their members as the group self-destructed in anarchy.

The Inquisition was carried out directly under papal direction. Its scope went far beyond rooting out the dualistic views of the Albigenses. It sought to destroy all heresy—all views that ran contrary to established Church doctrine or which threatened the absolute authority of the pope over the minds of men. In 1252 A.D. pope Innocent IV officially sanctioned the use of torture to force confessions and make heretics recant their views. For the next 250 years Europe was drenched with the blood of those guilty of thinking or speaking “differently from the Roman Church.” It was so bad that even the Catholic professor Rossetti wrote:

“It makes the heart of a true Christian bleed to think of this fatal error of the Latin Church, which by persecuting others laid the foundation of her own irreparable ruin. That the opinions held by these so-called heretics were most injurious to the Church of Rome cannot be denied, but the means taken to destroy them were, of all others, the most likely to strengthen them, and render them more deeply rooted. Daniel and St. John foretold that Satan’s delegate would use horrid cruelties and inundate Babylon with the blood of Christ’s martyrs; and the pope, to prove that he was not that delegate, did use horrid cruelties and cause Rome to overflow with the purest of Christian blood” (Guinness, p. 34).

Literally millions of Christians were put to death, either directly or indirectly by the Church in the war against thinking differently. Finally, at the fifth Lateran Church Council (1512–1517), A. Pucci, a Cardinal of the Church, told the pope,

“The whole body of Christendom is now subject to one head, even to thee; no one now opposes, no one now objects.” (Guinness, p. 37)

Perhaps he meant that by this that they had finally succeeded in killing all the heretics. Yet we can only imagine how God must have laughed at his statement. That Council ended in 1517, and later that same year Martin Luther sparked the Protestant Reformation by nailing his famous “95 Theses” on the Church door at Wittenberg, Bavaria on Oct. 31, 1517.

Just when the Church thought it had stamped out all its opposition and put all things under the feet of the Roman Church, their power began to fall. They had to relearn the lesson of Imperial Rome, that the more one persecutes Christians, the more they multiply, as others see the true character of both sides and ask themselves, *which is more Christ-like?*

The Protestant Reformation put the first cracks in the Roman Church that could not be repaired. Thus, 1517 marks the end of the Thyatira Church and the beginning of the era of Sardis, the precious stone, the remnant Church that God began to draw out of the Jezebel Church. The overcomers had been refined in Jezebel’s fire, along with the genuine heretics, for thinking differently and for desiring to obey God rather than men.

The Protestant Reformation signaled the time when papal power began to decline. Just as A. Pucci declared that all the world had finally submitted to Rome, either by force or by death, God said, “It is enough.” Rome’s spiritual power had peaked, and the judgment of God had begun.

Rising Power to Judge Heretics

The messages to the seven churches is really an overview of church history, where God points out the strengths and weaknesses of each church in the eras that they represent. As we will see later, the latter portion of the book of Revelation, beginning in chapter six, gives us the history of the iron beast of Rome and the little horn (church) that arose from that final beast empire.

The secular and religious histories are each covered in this way, although in reality they cannot be separated, for the church rose gradually to a position of secular as well as religious power. In fact, as we will see, the church competed with many kings for power, and the church sought many alliances with other kings in order to obtain protection and thereby increase its own power.

At the beginning, the church normally brought heretics to the secular authorities, headed by the emperor in Constantinople, for judgment. But by the thirteenth century the church had taken upon itself the full authority to judge heretics by its own assumed power. Hence, Pope Gregory IX was able to institute the Inquisition by his own power, rather than by receiving such authorization from any secular kings.

The Rise of Islam

When the church reached a certain level of corruption and violent behavior in the early seventh century, God brought judgment upon the church in the form of Islam. This event is more fully described by symbols in Revelation 9, as we will see. By the principle of “eye for eye” ([Exodus 21:24](#)), God raised up Islam to judge the church by the same violent means as the church had judged heretics.

To Islam, the church was the heretic, and its followers treated the Christians in the same way that the Church had treated its own heretics. Most Christians view Islam as “the enemy,” rather than as God’s agent of judgment, and so their hearts are hardened instead of being repentant. We find this prophesied in [Rev. 9:20, 21](#),

²⁰ And the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, so as not to worship demons, and the idols of gold and of silver and of brass and of stone and of wood, which can neither see or hear nor walk; ²¹ and they did not repent of their murders nor of their sorceries nor of their immorality nor of their thefts.

This speaks of the Christian West in general, and it prophesies that the people would fail to repent, even in the face of divine judgment. The church did not see itself as God saw it, for only the overcomers had the mind of Christ during this time period. The vast majority were religious, but carnal, and their view of Islam was much the same as the people of Judah after God had raised up Babylon to judge Jerusalem for its sin. This lack of insight is the bane of virtually all religion.

Immediately after the Roman church claimed the exclusive right to the title, “Universal Bishop,” God raised up Mohammed to bring judgment upon the church.

Pope Victor had first made this claim in 192 A.D., but he was forced to recant after Bishop Irenaeus opposed him. However, Victor had set a precedent that was to be used 414 years later in the year 606 A.D. Pope Boniface III then claimed to be the Universal Bishop, having sovereignty over all the other Catholic bishops, even though his predecessor, Gregory I (590–604) had written, “Whosoever calls himself universal priest or desires to be called so, was the forerunner of Antichrist.”

Gregory I proved to be the last Roman bishop to resist this title. Philip Schaff writes in his [History of the Christian Church](#), Vol. IV, p. 220,

“Boniface III (606–607) did not scruple to assume the title of ‘universal bishop,’ against which Gregory, in proud humility, had so indignantly protested as a blasphemous antichristian assumption.”

Because it was precisely 414 years from Victor’s attempt in 192 until Boniface’s assumption in 606, we can see that God had given the church a grace period of 414 years in which to repent of its usurpation of authority.

The number 414 is a period of “cursed time,” which I explained fully in my book, [Secrets of Time](#). It is actually a grace period that God gives nations after judgment is pronounced. God, in His mercy, gives men and nations opportunity to repent before divine judgment is actually executed. If men repent, the judgment is cancelled. If they do not, then judgment proceeds.

In this case, the Roman church usurped the place of Christ, thinking that it had the power to rule the people by its own will, rather than seeing itself as the enforcer of God’s law and a steward of the throne.

After Pope Boniface III assumed the title of Universal Bishop, Mohammed received his “revelation” and began to preach publicly in 612 A.D. We are feeling the effects of divine judgment by the hand of Islam to this day. It will continue until the people repent. Yet most of the Thyatira church era was taken up by the church’s war with Islam, believing that Islam was the problem and its destruction the solution.

The Church Disqualified

There is much more that could be written about the Thyatira church era, since it covers a period of nearly a thousand years. This present study, however, must focus upon the main issue raised in the message to the church, where Jezebel is singled out for condemnation. Even as she killed the prophets, so also did the church kill the overcomers, along with genuine heretics, by the spirit of Jezebel.

The other issue put forth in [Rev. 2:21](#) was Jezebel’s “immorality” (*porneuo*). This word describes the actions of church leadership as well as the spiritual adultery of the bride of Christ. Any time people are led to worship a god or anyone other than Jesus Christ Himself, or to prefer the laws of men, it is spiritual adultery.

Keep in mind that the church in the Pentecostal age was a manifestation of King Saul, who was made king because the people had rejected God ([1 Sam. 8:7](#)). It should also be noted that the people themselves did not know that they had rejected God. From their perspective, they just wanted a leader like the nations. The problem was that they lacked true knowledge of the situation, because they did not have the mind of God.

The Spirit of Knowledge ([Isaiah 11:2](#)) was their greatest need at that moment. The same was true of the church of Thyatira. True knowledge is to know Christ, His mind, His purpose, His goals, and His will. True knowledge is to see things through the eyes of Christ, rather than to lean upon one’s own understanding. This was the great lack in the Thyatira age, and its main symptom was the lack of education.

Most of that era is now called The Dark Ages, although from the church perspective, the Dark Ages (*saeculum obscurum*) lasted just sixty years from the election of Pope Sergius III in 904 until the death of Pope John XII in 964.

Cardinal Baronius (1538–1607) wrote a history of the popes in a book called *Annales Ecclesiastici*. He tells us of Theodora, wife of Theophylact, the senator of Rome, and their daughter Marozia, who, as a young girl, gave birth to the son of Pope Sergius, who ruled as pontiff from 904–911 A.D. The young boy grew up to become Pope John XI (931–935), becoming Pope at the age of twenty. His appointment was ensured by his mother, who was the de facto ruler of Rome at the time.

The Wikipedia tells us,

*The period was first identified and named by the Italian Cardinal and ecclesiastical historian Caesar Baronius in his Annales Ecclesiastici in the sixteenth century. Baronius' primary source for his history of this period was Liutprand of Cremona. Other scholars have dated the period more broadly or narrowly, and other terms, such as the **Pornocracy** (German: Pornokratie, from Greek pornokratia, “prostitute rule”) ...*

The term *Pornocracy* was coined by Liutprand, who lived during that time (920–972 A.D.), and Baronius used the term as well 600 years later in writing his book on papal history. It is clear that the church historians saw the tenth century as the low point in church morality, as well as in civil power. One might say the church was ruled by *Pornocrats*, who had mistresses and orgies that would make modern teens envious. These practices, however, disturbed many sincere church men, and they wrote about these things with sorrow or disdain.

There is far too much sordid history for us to include here. It is readily available in many sources where church history is discussed. Our purpose is to present a general history of time, along with some understanding of its prophetic meaning.

The most important feature of the *saeculum obscurum* was the fact that it began toward the end of the eighteenth Jubilee of the church, dating from 33 A.D. ($18 \times 49 = 882$, which, added to 33 A.D. brings us to 915 A.D.). Each jubilee cycle of church history fulfills a year in the reign of King Saul. In other words, Saul's forty-year reign prophesied of the forty-Jubilee reign of the church in the Pentecostal Age.

King Saul was disqualified ([1 Sam. 15:26](#)) in his eighteenth year during his war against the Amalekites. Saul had been called to bring judgment upon the Amalekites after their grace period of 414 years was completed, dating from their attack upon Israel as they came out of Egypt ([Exodus 17:14–16](#)).

Saul, being king at the time, was God's appointed judge to execute the sentence (curse of the law) upon Amalek. Saul, however, spared the Amalekite king (Agag) and thereby took Amalek's curse upon himself. In biblical law, a judge can only forgive sin if he is willing to pay its penalty. Jesus did this on the cross, being willing to pay the penalty for the sin of the world. When Saul forgave Agag, he took the curse upon himself and was then disqualified as king of Israel.

Since Saul was a type of the church, his disqualification in his eighteenth year prophesied of the church's disqualification toward the end of its eighteenth Jubilee (866–915 A.D.). This was the time in church history where the divine decree ensured that the church's anointing as king would not last forever. The church would be replaced ultimately by the overcomers in the Tabernacles Age. For further study of the prophecies of Saul, see my book, [Secrets of Time, chapter 6](#).

The Deep Things of Satan

[Revelation 2:24](#) continues,

²⁴ But I say to you, the rest who are in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not known the deep things of Satan, as they call them—I place no other burden on you. ²⁵ Nevertheless, what you have, hold fast until I come.

What the glorified Christ calls “the deep things of Satan” is related to the teachings of Jezebel in the local church of Thyatira, as well as the spirit of Jezebel in the Thyatira church era. As we have seen, the spirit of Jezebel involves persecution of the prophets and the remnant of grace, as well as her “*acts of immorality*.” The spirit of Jezebel teaches that it is good and righteous to set aside the love of God toward those believed to be heretics. The church attempted to eradicate “heresy” and to bring all men into unity and conformity to the beliefs of the hierarchy. Hence, love was sacrificed on the altar of unity.

The two largest issues that dominated the previous church era were (1) the nature of Christ, i.e., the Trinity, and (2) Universal Reconciliation and the ultimate destiny of unbelievers. After these church councils had done their work, it was as if a declaration of war had been issued. The simple apostolic formula of faith in Christ that formerly defined a believer was discarded in favor of faith in the church's ever-growing creed. It was as if Paul's statement in [Eph. 2:8](#) now was to read, “For by grace you have been saved through faith *and belief in the Trinity and in eternal punishment*.”

Hence, I have heard it said: “If you do not believe in eternal hell, then you will go there”—as if one's belief in hell were a prerequisite to salvation. The fact is, even Paul recognized that there were differences of opinion among believers, but never did he complicate his simple message of salvation by adding creeds to faith in Christ. The “core” of faith that is essential is to believe that Jesus died as the sacrifice for sin, rose again for our justification, and ascended to the throne on high. Anything beyond that is cause for an honest, sincere, and loving discussion, so that all may see truth in a clearer way.

Personally, I view as believers those who teach the “heresy” of eternal torment, and I hope that they will reciprocate by viewing as believers those who teach the “heresy” of Universal Reconciliation. After all, both sides (generally speaking) believe in the “essentials” of the faith. We only disagree on the extent to which Christ's sacrifice will be

effective. In the end, the overcomers ought to treat the church as David treated Saul, even if the church persecutes them.

I have seen by personal experience how the charge of “heresy” can suddenly call forth the spirit of Jezebel upon otherwise loving Christians. Christians can love any “lost” soul, but a “heretic” is treated as an enemy. It is comparable to the more secular spirit of war, where a declaration of war justifies all hatred and unlawful behavior. So also the spirit of war from Jezebel comes upon many believers, and they treat “heretics” as enemies. This is one of the “*deep things of Satan*” that the glorified Christ held against the church of Thyatira.

Authority over the Nations

There are two blessings given to the overcomers. [Rev. 2:26, 27](#) records the first blessing:

²⁶ And he who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations; ²⁷ and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to pieces, as I also have received authority from My Father.

Here we see that only the overcomers will be given authority over the nations. No such reward is given to those influenced by Jezebel in the church. This is a veiled reference to the church’s disqualification during the Thyatira era, even as Saul was disqualified earlier.

[Psalm 2:8, 9](#) is applied to the overcomers:

⁸ Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Thine inheritance, and the very ends of the earth as Thy possession. ⁹ Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, thou shalt shatter them like earthenware.

Under the Old Covenant, men used physical swords to kill and to destroy. The spirit of Jezebel employed such methods as well, having an Old Covenant mindset. But the remnant of grace knows that “*the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses*” ([2 Cor. 10:4](#)). The overcomers use “*the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*” ([Eph. 6:17](#)). The Jezebel spirit, however, disagrees, for “*the flesh is hostile toward God*” and “*does not subject itself to the law of God*” ([Rom. 8:7](#)).

Those who choose the New Covenant sword and who conquer the world through love are those who will be given authority in the age to come. Those incapable of love will not rule the nations.

The Morning Star

The second blessing is seen in [Rev. 2:28](#),

²⁸ and I will give him the morning star.

Toward the end of the book of Revelation, Jesus says in [Rev. 22:16](#), “*I am the root and offspring of David, the bright morning star.*” It is the same “star” prophesied in the oracle of Balaam in [Num. 24:17](#), saying,

¹⁷ I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near; a star shall come forth from Jacob, and a scepter shall rise from Israel, and shall crush through the forehead of Moab, and tear down all the sons of Sheth.

Balaam was a prophet with wrong motives. He prophesied things that are part of Scripture. His problem was not false prophecy, but a carnal heart that was “false” to Christ. His prophecy identifies the “star” with the “scepter.” Hence, it goes with the previous blessing about authority being given to the overcomers. The “star” is Christ, but the overcomers are His body. Therefore, the authority given to Christ is given to the overcomers who are “in Him.”

Paul says in [Eph. 1:18–23](#),

The Revelation: Book 2 - Chapter 1: Thyatira (529–1517 A.D.)

Page 92 of 618

¹⁸ I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,¹⁹ and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might²⁰ which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,²¹ far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come.²² And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church,²³ which is His body, the fulness of Him who fills all in all.

Paul tells us that the “*saints*” are “*His inheritance*,” which He received when He was seated at the right hand of God in heaven. Further, Christ, “*as head over all things*,” was given to the church as well. Unfortunately, the church as a whole did not qualify as overcomers, even as Israel as a whole did not qualify as the remnant of grace ([Rom. 11:7](#)). In the days of Ahab and Jezebel, there was only a remnant of 7,000 in all of Israel. In the parallel church of Thyatira there was also a small remnant of grace within the church.

In either case, the overcoming remnant are the ones who will be given the morning star and the scepter that goes with it. By the sword of the Spirit, they will shatter all resistance to the rule of Christ until all things are subjected under His feet.

Chapter 2: Sardis (1517–1776 A.D.)

Sardis was the ancient capital of the Kingdom of Lydia and was located about 50 miles inland, almost directly east of Smyrna. It was where gold and silver coinage began in the 8th century B.C.

Sardis was first established as a citadel on the top of a hill overlooking the Pactolus River, from which the people panned gold dust that flowed down from nearby Mount Tmolus. The Lydian metallurgists had discovered a way to separate gold from silver during the reign of Croesus, the wealthy king who ruled from 560–546 B.C.

The city developed in two distinct parts. The lower city near the river was settled by the poor, lower-class people living in huts made of reeds from the river. In the upper city, bordering the king's citadel on the hilltop, the upper class, wealthy people lived, surrounded by a protective wall.

The Precious Remnant

Sardis is a precious stone (sardius), uncommon, a remnant. This dual city may have served as a carnal type of the division between the church and the overcomers, pictured in Scripture as the difference between common and precious stones.

Likewise, its reputation for being the first city to learn how to separate silver from gold also suggests the separation of church and overcomers into separate categories.

This church represents the remnant of grace in the time of church idolatry. In the Old Covenant Church, God had preserved a remnant of 7,000 who had not bowed their knees to Baal according to the decrees of Jezebel. It should be noted, too, that these were only the survivors. Many more had already been killed.

Though we do not know a specific number of overcomers in the time of the Jezebel church under the New Covenant, we know they existed. Historically speaking, this remnant was expressed in the Protestant Reformation. This does not mean that all (or even a majority) of Protestants were overcomers. Nonetheless, the Protestant movement represented the church of Sardis, for they came out of great tribulation and were successful in establishing separate churches.

As they separated themselves, many asked them: “How can your beliefs be right when so many great theologians say you are wrong?” The answer is simple: “*By their fruits you will know them*” ([Matt. 7:20](#)). The fruit of church creeds produced a host of murderers and torturers who were devoid of the love of God, regardless of their claims.

There were Protestants, too, who after establishing new and perhaps better creeds, failed to manifest the love of Christ. It would be a long road back to the knowledge of truth and the mind of Christ. But yet there were many moves of the Holy Spirit along the way which paralleled Israel's journey from Egypt to the Promised Land, each contributing a new or better understanding of the word of God.

The first of these truths came from Martin Luther, who reinstated the great Passover truth: *by faith alone in the blood of the Lamb*. Later came the truth of the Holiness movement (the Red Sea); then the revelation that God still heals people (Marah); then the missionary movement (Elim); then Pentecost (Sinai); and finally, the revelation of Tabernacles and the five-fold ministry in the Latter Rain movement (Kadesh-barnea).

Today we await the final move of the Holy Spirit, carrying the revelation of the law (administered by the mind of Christ, that is, Joshua) that will bring us into the Promised Land.

The point is that the overcomers in history continued to remain as rare jewels among the rocks of violent and hateful men.

The Church's Name or Reputation

Christ's message to the church of Sardis begins in [Rev. 3:1](#),

¹ And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: He who has the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars, says this: "I know your deeds, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead."

This refers back to [Rev. 1:16](#), where John first saw the glorified Christ, "*and in His right hand He held the seven stars.*" In [Rev. 1:20](#) we read, "*the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.*" These seven angels can hardly be distinguished from the seven Spirits of God, which were supposed to speak through the leaders of each church.

The church leaders held a position similar to that of the *shaliach tzibbur* in the Jewish synagogues. These were the "messengers of the congregation," called to read the public prayers while the people said AMEN. He was also known as the *Chazzan*, or Cantor, and this title was also used later by the church. The *Chazzan* was supposed to be a righteous man of good reputation.

Since a messenger is an "angel," whether spiritual or physical, Scripture blends both together, in that the *chazzan* was supposed to manifest the presence of his assigned angel. The criticisms in Christ's messages to the seven churches shows that their leaders had not fully absorbed the character of their personal angel, and so the word in the angel had not yet fully become flesh in them.

In the message itself, verse 1 says that Christ recognized the deeds—both good and bad—of the Sardis church. Secondly, He says, "*you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.*" What does this mean? Many have focused upon the meaning of the Greek word *onoma*, "name." However, we must remember that John was expressing Hebrew concepts through Greek language. Hence, we should interpret "name" according to its Hebrew equivalent, *shem*, which is more than a name; it is also "reputation, fame, glory."

We see the word *shem* translated "famous" in [1 Chron. 12:30](#) and again in 22:5. One who had made a name for himself was a man of reputation. This is the sense in which the word is used in [Rev. 3:1](#). The church—or perhaps, more narrowly, the *shaliach tzibbur* or *chazzan* of that church—had a good reputation, yet is "dead."

The Concordant Version translates it more literally: "*you have a name that you are living, and are dead.*" In other words, this church or its leader had a good reputation that it was *living out*, or walking out in real life experience, and yet was spiritually dead. In other words, the church was a zombie, dead men walking around as if they were alive.

So far, this is not a good testimony of a church that is supposed to represent the overcoming remnant of grace. [Rev. 3:2](#) continues,

² Wake up, and strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die; for I have not found your deeds completed in the sight of My God.

Sleep is a common metaphor for death throughout the Scriptures. So the solution is to "wake up." The leader's calling was to serve as a watchman on the wall. Watchmen were supposed to be watchful, but if they slept at their post, the city might fall. The leader of Sardis, in this case, was the watchman who was exhorted to "wake up" and "*establish the rest who are about to be dying*" (Concordant Version).

In other words, people were in danger of dying by following the example of the sleeping leader. There was much work to be done, "*for I have not found your deeds (works) completed in the sight of My God.*" This is a prophetic statement about the Sardis church era from 1517–1776. Although they had done well in breaking away from worshipping men, there was still much work to be done to enjoy a good reputation *with God*. Their work was yet partial.

This prophesied that the Protestants were by no means perfect.

The Revelation: Book 2 - Chapter 2: Sardis (1517–1776 A.D.)

Remember and Repent

[Revelation 3:3](#) continues,

³ Remember therefore what you have received and heard; and keep it, and repent. If therefore you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come upon you.

What had the Sardis church “*received and heard*” that they were supposed to keep (preserve)? We are told nothing about the church in the city of Sardis itself that might tell us what exactly they were supposed to preserve, guard, or keep (Greek: *tareo*). Our greatest clues come from understanding that they represent the remnant of grace, both in the Old Covenant church as well as the New Covenant church.

Elijah knew little about the remnant of grace, other than that they had been killed. Paul tells us more in [Rom. 11:2–7](#). The lesson he draws from the story of Elijah and the 7,000 is stated in [Rom. 11:5, 6](#),

⁵ In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God’s gracious choice. ⁶ But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace.

The obvious answer is that the remnant had been given an understanding of *grace* itself. And so we find in the Sardis church era that the foundation of Protestant theology rested on their concept of *grace*, as opposed to *works*. This was what they were supposed to “keep,” if it were possible. But because Christ tells Sardis to “repent,” it is obvious that they would either lose this concept or that their understanding of grace would be incomplete.

So in history we find that some of the Protestants abused Roman Catholics as much as they themselves had been abused. John Calvin burned Michael Servetus at the stake in Geneva on October 27, 1553.

There were other Catholic “martyrs” in other places such as in England after King Henry VIII broke from the Roman church and established the Church of England. The Roman church points to their 300 martyrs, hoping that their own actions in killing and torturing multiplied millions of dissenters will be overlooked or forgotten.

Although the Protestants elevated grace to a great extent, they still did not comprehend its full significance under the New Covenant. Their understanding of grace was incomplete, mostly because they did not know the foundational principle of the New Covenant—that it is based upon God’s vow to man, rather than man’s vow to God.

This is why even the remnant was called “*according to God’s gracious choice*,” as Paul said in [Rom. 11:5](#). By contrast, a remnant of works (i.e., by man’s Old Covenant vow) would be according to man’s choice and man’s will. Israel’s vow in [Exodus 19:8](#) is the prime example of a remnant of works. But Paul tells us that if it is by works, it is no longer by grace. Because grace is chained to God’s choice, rather than man’s “works,” it is plain that the “works” include the matter of will. God chose by His own will and therefore vowed to do something (“works”). So also when men choose by their own will, it is also a matter of “works” as they strive to fulfill their vows to God.

The Protestants shed many of the “works” that the Roman church required for salvation, but they failed to address the root of those works—man’s will. In other words, they chopped down the tree of works, but they failed to pull it up by its roots. They retained the idea that man’s will—that is, his decision to follow Christ—is what obtains saving grace to us. But this is a reversion to the Old Covenant, which cannot save anyone, unless that person is fully able to fulfill His vow to follow Christ. See my book, [The Two Covenants](#).

[Psalm 80:3, 7](#) appeals to God to turn us (*shuv*) so that we may be saved. It is the same with our love for Christ, for [1 John 4:19](#) says, “We love, because He first loved us.” Paul traces the genealogy of salvation plainly in [Rom. 10:13–15](#),

¹³ for “Whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved.” ¹⁴ How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? ¹⁵ And how shall they preach unless they are sent?

Until God takes the first step to make that happen, it is foolish to say that men everywhere should believe in Christ. When men “*call upon the name of the Lord*,” it is only the final step in a series of events tracing back to God’s grace in sending a preacher. In other words, God took the initiative to fulfill His New Covenant vow to make us His people and to be our God ([Deut. 29:12, 13](#)).

Grace, then, is the work of God on our behalf. No believer, then, can take credit for his own salvation, for he has only responded to the grace-work of God. This is why we are begotten of God, not by the will of man, nor by his flesh, but by God’s will alone ([John 1:13](#)). He has wooed us by His great love; therefore, we have responded with love that He has implanted within our hearts.

The Sardis church era produced Protestants, but these had an incomplete understanding of grace. Hence, they were partially works-oriented; that is, their doctrine was a mixture of grace and works. At any rate, since we are to judge by their fruits, we see much that is good, but also much that is deficient.

Coming as a Thief

Christ threatens the Sardis church, saying that if they do not wake up and finish the course laid before them, He would “*come like a thief*” ([Rev. 3:3](#)). In other words, Christ says, “*you will not know at what hour I will come upon you*.”

In those days, thieves came in companies. The “thief” metaphor was not meant to conjure up thoughts of a cat burglar, who silently creeps into a house at night to steal jewelry. The Eastern metaphor depicted a band of thieves riding into town early in the morning while men slept, throwing everyone into chaos, and killing anyone who resisted their plundering.

Paul used this same metaphor in [1 Thess. 5:2–6](#),

² For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. ³ While they are saying, “Peace and safety!” then destruction will come upon them suddenly like birth pangs upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. ⁴ But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day should overtake you like a thief ... ⁶ so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober.

The thief comes while men are sleeping. This is the warning to Sardis, which was “dead” and needed to “wake up.” If they did not repent and wake up, then they would find themselves plundered, shaken, and possibly even killed in “*the day of the Lord*.” Many Christians expect to be raptured, of course, not understanding the prophecies of the feast of Tabernacles. They do not realize that they are in danger, because the watchmen are asleep, and those who are awake are too few.

The message, then, is to be awake and alert, so that we will not be taken by surprise when the day of the Lord comes. This implies that those who are awake will NOT be surprised. In other words, they will have enough understanding to see that day coming, in spite of what Jesus told His disciples in [Acts 1:7](#),

⁷ He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority.”

It seems to me that if we are watchful, we may be given some general knowledge of the times in which we live. The message to Sardis implies that those who are awake and sober, not having imbibed upon the wine of Babylon, will have sufficient knowledge of the timing of the day of the Lord so that they will not be surprised when it comes.

White Garments

God commends the church in Sardis, saying in [Rev. 3:4, 5](#),

⁴ But you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their garments; and they will walk with Me in white; for they are worthy. ⁵ He who overcomes shall thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life; and I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels.

God first gave garments to Adam and Eve in [Gen. 3:21](#). These, of course, were substitute garments made of skins, which represented physical flesh. Later, the priests were instructed to wear white linen garments when ministering to God in the tabernacle and the temple ([Lev. 16:32](#)). Even the common people were instructed to wash their garments before approaching God at Mount Horeb ([Exodus 19:10](#)).

Having clean garments symbolized having clean hearts and being clothed on the outside with righteous works in daily life. In fact, they were all supposed to put a blue cord or string on the tassels of their garments in order to remember God's commandments ([Num. 15:38–40](#)). No garment was complete without this, and this was a symbol of their obedience to God and to His law.

Garments of Salvation

[Isaiah 61:10](#) prophesies,

¹⁰ I will rejoice greatly in the Lord, My soul will exult in my God; for He has clothed me with garments of salvation, He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

These garments necessarily include the blue cord to show lawful (obedient) behavior when people are led by the Spirit. But perhaps more important is the fact that it is God Himself who clothes His people with these garments. In the Old Testament type and shadow, men clothed themselves with physical garments, but under the New Covenant, it is God who does it by His grace.

Further, these are garments of *yesha*, “salvation.” The word *yesha* is just another form of *Yeshua*, which is translated later as Jesus. So Paul says in [Gal. 3:27](#),

²⁷ For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

This clothing also represents the New Creation Man, which is to say that we have become new creatures, new beings having new identities, and no longer of the old Adamic man. Paul says in [Eph. 4:24](#),

²⁴ and put on the new self [*anthropos*, “man”], which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

This is repeated in [Col. 3:10](#),

¹⁰ and have put on the new self [*anthropos*, “man”] who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him—¹¹ a renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all.

These new garments are thus available on an equal basis to all men, regardless of their ethnicity or social class. All have equal opportunity to put on the garments of Jesus Christ—or rather, for God to clothe them with the garments of Jesus.

Yet no one is clothed with these garments until they are begotten by the seed of the gospel, for it is only the new man that can receive such garments. The fact that all will eventually receive these garments does not contradict this, because God has not yet drawn all men to Himself ([John 12:32](#)). Neither do we yet see all things subjected to Christ ([Heb. 2:8](#)). This divine plan is necessarily done in steps, because not all men live in a single time or generation. Neither do all who live in a given generation come to believe the truth of the gospel.

Furthermore, even believers in Christ are not necessarily worthy to receive these garments, as we see in the message to Sardis. This does not mean that they will lose their salvation, but that they will not be changed at the time of the first resurrection ([Rev. 20:4–6](#)). Those who do not qualify for the first resurrection will be given immortality in the second resurrection, where all the dead are summoned to the throne ([Rev. 20:12](#)). That resurrection will include both believers and unbelievers ([John 5:28, 29](#); [Acts 24:15](#)), and the believers at that time will be “*saved yet so as through fire*” ([1 Cor. 3:15](#)).

The message to the Sardis church makes it clear that only a few people in that church were walking in clean garments—that is, living lawfully according to the commandments of God, rather than living legalistically by the traditions of men. These few “*will walk with Me in white; for they are worthy*” ([Rev. 3:4](#)). The clear implication is that the others in the church will NOT be clothed in white, for they are unworthy of such garments. Only “*he who overcomes shall thus be clothed in white garments*” ([Rev. 3:5](#)).

Not all believers are overcomers.

The Book of Life

[Rev. 3:5](#) says of the overcomers, “*I will not erase his name from the book of life.*” Putting this as a negative statement implies that He intends to erase the names of non-overcomers from the book of life. One cannot erase a name unless it is already pre-written. This implies that some believers, those who were genuinely begotten by the seed of the word, those who truly had Christ in them as their hope of glory, can lose their place in the book of life.

Here we have stumbled upon the centuries-old dispute between Calvin and Arminius. Calvin taught “once saved, always saved,” while Arminius said that one may lose his salvation if he repudiates Christ. Both were half-right. What they did not understand was that the finished work of Christ on the cross sealed *the fact* that all men would be saved in the end, but that *the timing* of their salvation was yet to be determined (from man’s perspective).

Hence, “once saved, always saved” is absolutely true if we tie it to the cross. Even if they are “lost,” Jesus will find them in the end ([Luke 15:4–7](#)). Likewise, believers may lose their salvation (temporarily) if they renounce Christ. They may find their name erased from the book of life, but not forever. The book of life records the names of those who are currently eligible to receive the garments—the immortal body—that Christ secured for them by His death and resurrection.

It is obvious that if names can be erased from the book of life that this book is constantly being updated, as it were. It is not a book that records the ultimate goal, which is the salvation of all men, for then it would never need updating, nor could any name be erased. So Arminius was partially correct in saying that salvation could be lost. His error was in not recognizing the power of the cross to save all mankind in the end.

In fact, that was Calvin’s main error as well. The Restoration of All Things was the missing ingredient in both of their teachings, which, if they had known, would have gone far to reconcile the two teachings and bring peace between the two reformers.

Confessing Names Before the Father

[Rev. 3:5](#) says of the overcomers, “*I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels.*” This confession comes in a divine court setting. Obviously, no name will be confessed unless it is written in the book of life.

The word “confess” is from a compound Greek word *homologeō*, which means “to say the same thing as another; to agree with, assent.” Therefore, this idea of confessing one’s name in the divine court establishes the fact that two parties are in agreement. This is, of course, the prime characteristic of the overcomers. Those believers who have experienced Passover have *faith* in the blood of the Lamb. Those who experienced (true) Pentecost are the *obedient* ones, being led by the Spirit. But those who experience Tabernacles are in *agreement* with Christ.

In [Matt. 10:32, 33](#) Jesus says,

³² Everyone therefore who shall confess Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. ³³ But whoever shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven.

In other words, everyone who is in agreement with Jesus in this present age, and is not afraid to state this publicly, will hear Jesus’ testimony telling the divine court, “I am in agreement with him/her. This is my son, one who has been begotten of Me, a new creation.” When will Jesus’ public confession be made? In a sense, of course, He backs His people in every age and epoch, regardless of time. However, the context of [Rev. 3:5](#) shows a specific divine court setting, which fully manifests at the Great White Throne in [Rev. 20:12](#), where the book of life is opened.

So the Sardis church—the church of the remnant of grace—is warned not to presume that their names are all written in the book of life. The overcomers among them are in agreement with Christ. The rest need to “wake up” and “repent,” lest Jesus come upon them “like a thief” to “steal,” as it were, their names from the book of life. It is far better to pray that Jesus steals and removes all things that hinder our understanding of His grace, so that we may come fully into agreement with His will and His plan for creation.

[Revelation 3:6](#) concludes,

⁶ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

Chapter 3: Philadelphia (1776–1914 A.D)

The original city of Philadelphia was established in 189 B.C. by King Eumenes II of Pergamos as a tribute to his loyal brother. Philadelphos literally means “one who loves his brother.” Eumenes reigned from 197–160, and afterward his brother, Attalus II succeeded him and reigned from 159–138.

After his death, his nephew, Attalus III, who was the son of his beloved brother, Eumenes, took the throne from 138–133, but he had little interest in being a king. He preferred to study medicine, botany, and gardening. At his death in 133, and leaving no heirs to the throne, he willed the city to Rome in order to prevent a civil war from competing successors.

Philadelphia was one of a dozen cities largely destroyed by the great earthquake of 17 A.D. Roman Emperor Tiberius relieved the cities of any tax burdens for a time, and the grateful citizens of Philadelphia then paid special honors to Tiberius.

Perhaps this tax relief can be viewed as a subtle sign of things to come in the American Revolution, which was popularized as a revolt against taxes without representation.

The American Philadelphia

America is a political byproduct of the Protestant Reformation. John Calvin’s experiment in Switzerland, where he put into practice the principles of Christian government in the city of Geneva, taught people the basic principles of how to establish a Christian Nation. And so, in 1776 we come to an event that took place in Philadelphia in the New World that was the climax of Protestant thinking in the time of the Sardis Church—the signing of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776.

This year was also important because it was 2,520 years after the beginning of Israel’s captivity and deportations by the Assyrians in 745 B.C. As we pointed out in [Chapter 15 of Secrets of Time](#), this was when the descendants of the House of Israel, who had long forgotten their origins in Israel, began to be reformed into a new nation under the motto: *e pluribus unum*, “out of many, one.”

This was definitely a major turning point in prophetic history, though the 40-Jubilee wilderness sojourn of the church was still not completed. Yet the preachers of the day believed this was the “stone kingdom” of [Dan. 2:35](#) arising. Their optimism and enthusiasm, led by such leaders as Timothy Dwight, 8th president of Yale College from 1795–1817, imparted to the American church a sense of destiny and a vision of establishing the Kingdom of God. He served as President of Yale while the United States capital was at Philadelphia before the city of Washington D.C. was built (1800).

However, as history now shows, this new nation, though important, was yet imperfect and under the rule of carnal administrators who lacked the understanding of the divine law necessary to fulfill the prophecies of the Kingdom. There was yet a Laodicean era of the church that lay ahead. Since Laodicea represents the church of the Babylonian captivity, its immediate predecessor (Philadelphia) was the church whose insufficiency led to this captivity.

Three Types of Love

There are three types of love, two of which are expressed in Scripture as *phileo*, or “brotherly love” and *agape*, or “divine love.” The third is *eros*, which is mere physical attraction, but this does not appear in Scripture at all. *Phileo* love is good, but it only describes a relationship that meets another person halfway.

Phileo is about fairness and justice, whereas *agape* goes beyond justice into unconditional love. When applying these terms to our relationship with God, *phileo* correlates with Pentecost, wherein we learn obedience to His law and His

standard of living. Agape, on the other hand, encompasses the love of God, and when we manifest such love, we are in agreement with Him.

Spiritual maturity can also be measured according to one's ability to love. *Eros* is the most immature form and is mostly expressed as a need that must be met by others. It is therefore primarily selfish, as that of a baby or toddler. *Phileo* is a 50/50 relationship, where siblings learn the principles of fairness and justice in their relationships. *Agape* is mature love that gives freely. It is love expressed by grace and is necessary in order to be a good parent. Without *agape*, a parent can never train children to know the love of God.

Philadelphia means "City of Brotherly Love," or *phileo* love.

Philadelphia in America

The Church of Philadelphia (1776–1914) is well seen in the great American experiment. Its founders believed in liberty in law. It sought to bring the Church into a *phileo* relationship among its citizens and among all the nations. Prior to the Protestant Reformation the world saw few benevolent civil rulers or religious leaders. The only example most of them knew was of men with selfish interests who had not learned the basic principles of *phileo*. Such rulers, both religious and civil, knew only *eros*, the need to be served by others.

The establishment of America in the city of Philadelphia was an attempt by the people to establish a *phileo*-Christian government. This was not bad, but it was imperfect, as subsequent history has proven. Regardless of how good our Constitution was in its beginning, and regardless of how just our laws were, there is no way for any nation to maintain its righteousness apart from having godly administrators. We see this in the story of Israel, a nation with a perfect system of law given by the mouth of God Himself—but a nation that degenerated into utter apostasy because of ungodly leaders and immoral people demanding freedom to sin.

There were many in early America who had a vision of building the Kingdom of God in the earth. But apart from the manifestation of the sons of God, which would bring forth perfect administrators of the divine law, how can any nation do anything but degenerate as even the House of Israel degenerated during biblical times?

Even so, America's founding was a very important date in the history of the Kingdom of God, simply because it gave Christians a new vision for the manifestation of the Kingdom of God upon the earth as it already is in heaven. The main problem was that this began in the days of the Church of Philadelphia, the sixth church era. The 40 Jubilees of "Saul" had not yet run its course. And for this reason, the vision came too early to become a physical reality.

The Philadelphia church is also the Hezekiah church. Christ's message to this church draws upon the lessons of King Hezekiah. His strengths and weaknesses are seen clearly in the New Covenant church of Philadelphia. If the Philadelphia church would follow the Spirit of Strength, or Might, it could overcome the problems of its time. But, of course, only the overcomers would actually have the strength to come into agreement with God during this era. And so, as we will see, the Philadelphia church era ended in captivity, even as the Old Covenant Hezekiah church too ended in captivity to Babylon.

The Message to Philadelphia

[Revelation 3:7](#) begins Christ's message:

⁷ And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: He who is holy, who is true, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, and who shuts and no one opens, says this:

Christ here presents Himself as the one who is both "holy" (*hagios*) and "true" (*alethinous*). To be "holy" is to be set apart for God and worthy of being revered. To be "true" means that it has not only the name and resemblance, but also the real nature corresponding to the name. It corresponds in every respect to the idea signified by its name or what it is called. To be true contrasts with that which is fictitious, counterfeit, imaginary, simulated, or pretended.

For Christ to present Himself as such sets the standard of measure for this church. To be an overcomer is to overcome the spirit of religious simulation and hypocritical pretention and to come fully into agreement and harmony with Christ's character.

Even as the Sardis church marked a turning point in church history in 1517, so also the Philadelphia church raises the level of God's expectations. Philadelphia was to be a transition from judicial love (*phileo*) into the full divine love (*agape*). Believers were to learn to treat each other justly as they matured into *agape* love. Unfortunately, only a few became overcomers, as history shows.

The Power Struggle

[Rev. 3:7](#) also speaks of a new door that was to be opened to the church. This is the door that is seen in the story of Hezekiah, who replaced Shebna, his steward, with Eliakim, who was worthy of this position of authority. The story is told in [Isaiah 22:15–25](#). Shebna is introduced to us in verse 15 as “*Shebna, who is in charge of the royal household.*”

In [Isaiah 22:18](#), the prophet addresses him, “*you shame of your master's house.*” We do not know why Shebna was a shame to the house of David. However, some time earlier, in [2 Kings 18:18](#), we find that Shebna was only a scribe, and Eliakim was the head steward over Hezekiah's household. This certainly was prior to Shebna's downfall, because it is highly unlikely, given Isaiah's dire word, that Shebna would have been demoted to a scribe. He was cast out and exiled ([Isaiah 22:18](#)) when he finally fell into disgrace.

Hence, it appears that at some point in time Shebna usurped the position of Eliakim, perhaps by falsely accusing Eliakim of some indiscretion. But later, when the truth became known, Shebna was exiled, and Eliakim was then restored to his former position. It also appears that Isaiah understood the problem and backed Eliakim, for he prophesied to Shebna in [Isaiah 22:20, 21](#) saying,

²⁰ Then it will come about in that day, that I will summon My servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah; ²¹ and I will clothe him with your [Shebna's] tunic, and tie your sash securely about him. I will entrust him with your authority, and he will become a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah.

Since this was a prophecy about a future event, we know that Isaiah received this word while Shebna was still the chief steward, or Chief of Staff, in the king's house. In other words, the prophet knew the truth before King Hezekiah discovered it.

The Open Door and the Key of David

Isaiah prophesied that Hezekiah would take the key of David from Shebna and give it to Eliakim, who was worthy of this position of trust in the House of David. [Isaiah 22:22](#) says,

²² Then I will set the key of the house of David on his shoulder. When he opens, no one will shut; when he shuts, no one will open.

This is the verse that is referenced in Christ's message to the Philadelphia church in [Rev. 3:8](#), which says,

⁸ I know your deeds. Behold, I have put before you an open door which no one can shut, because you have little power [*dunamis*, “strength, power, ability”], and have kept My word, and have not denied My name.

In other words, Isaiah's prophecy not only applied to the situation in the Hezekiah church but also in the era of the Philadelphia church. Hezekiah's name means “strength of Yahweh.” His name is derived from the root word *chazak*, “to strengthen, prevail, be strong.” Even as the Hezekiah church showed strength, so also Christ says of the Philadelphia church, “*you have a little power,*” or strength.

Hezekiah's strength was in the fact that he was a godly king who "*did right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father David had done*" ([2 Kings 18:3](#)). In fact, [2 Kings 18:5-7](#) says,

⁵ He trusted in the Lord, the God of Israel; so that after him there was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor among those who were before him. ⁶ For he clung to the Lord; he did not depart from following Him, but kept His commandments, which the Lord had commanded Moses. ⁷ And the Lord was with him; wherever he went he prospered.

In other words, he was Judah's best king since David himself. The Hezekiah church, then, saw a time of prosperity on account of its godly strength. Likewise, the American Experiment that began in Philadelphia in 1776, saw a time of national prosperity and strength. It was established openly as a Christian Republic, as subsequent Supreme Court rulings claimed, and the foundational principles of government were rooted in the laws of nature and nature's God (the "Creator").

It was as if the world had been given an open door through this nation. The oppressed peoples of Europe looked at America with awe and delight, while the rulers of the old Roman church order were frightened, lest their own nations would rise up and demand the same type of government. Those old powers quickly took the reins of the new American government and usurped power over it, in order to begin to turn the hearts of the people back into idolatry and immorality.

Perhaps the most serious subversion of the law of God was its refusal to apply the law equally and impartially to all men. Slavery was a divisive issue from the beginning, but only because, when the time came to vote on whether slavery should be included or excluded in the Constitution, one of the two delegates from New Jersey failed to appear for the crucial vote. At that time, both state delegates had to be present in order for either of their votes to count. Both of the New Jersey delegates were anti-slavery, but because one was not present, the other vote too was lost. And so the clause prohibiting slavery was lost, and as Civil War General John A. Logan wrote later in his book,

"Thus was lost the great opportunity of restricting Slavery to the existing Slave States, and of settling the question peaceably for all time" (The Great Controversy, p. 4).

Both the slavery issue as well as relations with the native American people were the main weaknesses of the American nation and the Philadelphia church. Up to that time, studies of biblical law had been extensive for two centuries, but their viewpoint was still largely based upon the Old Covenant. Not truly understanding the New Covenant, they failed to see the full distinction between the power of the physical sword and the power of the sword of the Spirit.

Hence, they conquered men by physical force and enslaved those that they had conquered. If they had understood the power of the spiritual sword, they would have used it to set men free, rather than to enslave them. But the principle of brotherly love was yet restricted to white people, and many (especially those in government and in the legal system) did not consider non-whites to be "men" in legal language.

For this reason, the government believed itself to be free to violate any treaty with the Indian tribes, for they were not included in the legal definition of "men" when the treaties were written. Hence, only the overcomers were able to meet the standard of holiness and truth presented by the One who gave the message to the Philadelphia church.

The key of David is *agape* Love. David's name means "love," so his key is the key of love. The love of God is impartial, for [James 2:8](#), [2](#) says,

⁸ If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law, according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing well. ⁹ But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors.

History shows that the law of love was the key of David that was offered to the church of Philadelphia from 1776–1914. Yet the church of Brotherly Love failed to understand the basic principle of *phileo* love in their study of the

divine law. Because they, as a whole, did not grasp that key, which would have opened up the door fully, the Philadelphia church era ended in captivity, even as the Hezekiah church ended in captivity to Babylon.

The Jews Who Are Not Jews

[Revelation 3:9](#) says,

⁹ Behold, I will cause those of the synagogue of Satan, who say that they are Jews, and are not, but lie— behold, I will make them to come and to bow down at your feet, and to know that I have loved you.

This is an expanded version of [Rev. 2:9](#), which we saw in our study of the Smyrna church. The Smyrna church was the New Covenant equivalent of the Korah church. Korah rebelled against Moses and Aaron, and he proved to be a rebellious usurper. He was ambitious and wanted to be the high priest, though God had not called him for that purpose. Hence, he was of “*the synagogue of Satan*” (or, adversary) in his day, one who wanted to usurp the authority of someone else’s calling.

The same spiritual problem had surfaced in Smyrna, and a similar problem had emerged in the church of Philadelphia. Prophetically speaking, however, this represents a different church era. In the Hezekiah church under the Old Covenant, the usurper was Shebna, the king’s chief steward over the royal household. He had usurped the position of Eliakim for a time, but Isaiah prophesied that this situation would be rectified, for Eliakim was truly called to have that position of authority.

In the Philadelphia church era (1776–1914), we see a broader fulfillment of this Old Testament story of Shebna and Eliakim. The theme shifts from Korah, who desired the priesthood, to Shebna, who desired to hold the key of David. Literally speaking, this was the key to the royal treasury, which funded that which the steward was responsible to oversee.

Modern Shebna in Prophecy

The “Shebna” of the Philadelphia era has been the Rothschild family of Jewish bankers who became “guardians of the papal treasure.” The Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. X, under the heading “Rothschild,” tells us,

“Meanwhile the Nationalist and Reactionary parties in France desired to counterbalance the “Semitic” influence of the Rothschilds by establishing a banking concern which should be essentially Catholic. Accordingly in 1876 the Union Générale was founded with a capital of 4,000,000 francs, increased to 25,000,000 francs in 1878 under the direction of a certain Bontoux. After various vicissitudes, graphically described by Zola in his novel “L’Argent,” the Union failed, and brought many of the Catholic nobility of France to ruin, leaving the Rothschilds still more absolutely the undisputed leaders of French finance, but leaving also a legacy of hatred which had much influence on the growth of the anti-Semitic movement in France. Something analogous occurred in England when the century-long competition of the Barings and the Rothschilds culminated in the failure of the former in 1893; but in this case the Rothschilds came to the rescue of their rivals and prevented a universal financial catastrophe. It is a somewhat curious sequel to the attempt to set up a Catholic competitor to the Rothschilds that at the present time the latter are the guardians of the papal treasure.”

<http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/12909-rothschild>

In other words, the Rothschilds became the financial stewards of the Vatican’s wealth, having the key to the treasury of the Roman church. The European powers in 1815, who signed the Holy Alliance at the Congress of Vienna, appointed the Rothschild bankers as guardians over all papal property for a period of 99 years.

The key is in understanding what a *guardian* is. Black’s Law Dictionary defines a guardian as:

“A guardian is a person lawfully invested with the power, and charged with the duty, of taking care of the person and managing the property and rights of another person who, for some peculiarity of status, or defect of age, understanding, or self-control, is considered incapable of administering his own affairs.”

Because of the corrupt and subversive manner in which the Roman church had used its resources, Napoleon took the pope captive in 1798, abolished the papacy for a time, and then resurrected it later. After Napoleon’s defeat, the three other main powers of Europe (Russia, Germany, and Austria) met in Vienna to redraw the map of Europe and also to decide the fate of the Roman church. As the Jewish Encyclopedia tells us, they put the Vatican under legal guardianship of the Rothschild banks so that the church could not continue to subvert the monarchs of Europe.

When this arrangement began is not stated, but the article above implies that a Catholic bank, Union Générale, had been set up in 1876 to compete with the Jewish Rothschild banks that had wanted to manage the papal treasure prior to that time. The Rothschilds, as “bankers to the Holy Alliance” (Neill Ferguson, The House of Rothschild, Vol. II, p. 127), were the logical ones to appoint as “guardians of the papal treasure.” The problem, of course, was that the Rothschilds used this power for personal gain and to promote the establishment of a false “Israel” in 1948.

Hence, the Rothschilds used their position of trust to replace true Judah with those who say they are Jews, but who lie ([Rev. 3:9](#)). This issue was seen in its prophetic type in the story of Shebna in the time of King Hezekiah, and its fulfillment came in the time of the church of Philadelphia, that is, the Hezekiah church era.

As we will see later, this situation provides us with an early summary of the prophetic history that is yet to be revealed when we study the second beast in Revelation 13. The “*beast coming up out of the earth*” is a banking beast which forms an alliance with the first (papal, religious) beast from the sea (“Holy See”).

The point is that the Rothschilds have played the role of Shebna, both in the Philadelphia church and the Laodicean era—and beyond. They are the ones “*who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie.*” Nonetheless, the prophecy in [Rev. 3:9](#) shows that they will be overthrown and replaced by prophetic “Eliakim,” those who are truly called as overcomers to hold the key of David. These are the ones who steward the Kingdom by Love, rather than by personal greed or by racial bias and partiality.

The Hour of Testing

[Revelation 3:10](#) continues,

¹⁰ Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell upon the earth.

The “hour of testing,” from a prophetic standpoint, began in 1914 with World War I and the passage of the Federal Reserve Act, which put the world into the bondage of Mystery Babylon. The Federal Reserve Bank is owned by 12 banking families in alliance with the Vatican. It was the crowning achievement of the unholy alliance between the beast from the sea and the beast from the earth.

God promised that the Philadelphia church would avoid this “hour of testing,” leaving it to the final church era to experience. Laodicea is the Church of the Captivity. So also we see with Hezekiah himself. He was spared from captivity, though the Assyrians had surrounded Jerusalem and had deported most of the Judeans from surrounding communities ([2 Kings 18:13](#)). But Hezekiah sought God, and Jerusalem was delivered ([2 Kings 19:35, 36](#)).

Nonetheless, God tested the “strength” of Hezekiah when the envoys of the king of Babylon came to Jerusalem after hearing how Hezekiah had been healed miraculously. At the time of his healing, God had given him a sign where the sun went back ten steps on the sun dial ([2 Kings 20:11](#)). No doubt the Babylonian astronomers had taken notice of this, and they sent envoys to investigate the rumors ([2 Kings 20:12](#)).

In [2 Chron. 32:31](#) we read that God tested Hezekiah through this visit:

The Revelation: Book 2 - Chapter 3: Philadelphia (1776–1914 A.D)

Page 106 of 618

³¹ And even in the matter of the envoys of the rulers of Babylon, who sent to him to inquire of the wonder that had happened in the land, God left him alone only to test him, that He might know all that was in his heart.

Hezekiah foolishly showed the temple treasures to the Babylonian envoys. [2 Kings 20:13](#) says, “*there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion that Hezekiah did not show them.*” As a consequence, Isaiah the prophet told him in [2 Kings 20:17](#),

¹⁷ “Behold the days are coming when all that is in your house, and all that your fathers have laid up in store to this day shall be carried to Babylon; nothing shall be left,” says the Lord.

So spoke the Spirit of Might (strength) to Hezekiah, whose name means “Strength of Yahweh.” The Spirit of Might had tested Hezekiah, and though he was a godly king, he failed this test, perhaps because of his pride or dependency upon his riches. Yet Hezekiah submitted to the word of the Lord and was glad that God decided to delay the judgment until after he was dead. [2 Kings 20:19](#) says,

¹⁹ Then Hezekiah said to Isaiah, “The word of the Lord which you have spoken is good.” For he thought, “Is it not so, if there shall be peace and truth in my days?”

And so Hezekiah was spared the “hour of testing” that was to come upon Judah and Jerusalem, when Babylon would bring them into captivity. All of this became a pattern of prophecy for a future time in the churches of Philadelphia and Laodicea. Philadelphia was spared, but it foolishly laid the foundations for the captivity of the Laodicean church, which began in 1914.

The lesson is given in [Rev. 3:11](#),

¹¹ I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, in order that no one take your crown.

The Babylonians were not able to take the crown of Hezekiah, but they did take the crown of Judah soon afterward. In like manner, this warning was given to the Philadelphia church. The implication is that the Laodicean church would be dethroned and go into captivity on account of the root of spiritual pride that had arisen during the Philadelphia era. They were proud of their wealth and prosperity accumulated through the unholy alliance with the Rothschild banks.

The Temple Pillars

[Rev. 3:12](#), [13](#) gives the concluding message to the Philadelphia church, saying,

¹² He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore; and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name. ¹³ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

The overcomers will become pillars in the temple of God. What does this mean?

There were two pillars in Solomon’s temple, named Jachin and Boaz. [1 Kings 7:21](#) says,

²¹ Thus he set up the pillars at the porch of the nave; and he set up the right pillar and named it Jachin, and he set up the left pillar and named it Boaz.

These two pillars stood at the entrance of the temple, so that the priests had to pass between them to enter the Holy Place. The promise given to the overcomers is that they will enter the Holy Place and “*not go out from it anymore.*” It means they will arrive at their destination in the presence of God once and for all and will no longer lose His presence.

Revivals have come and gone over the centuries. It seems that the Holy Spirit has been poured out countless times in various times and places, but each time, the season ends and things go back to “normal.” Likewise, even today the perception among many believers is that they must go to church to enter God’s presence. The church is said to be God’s house, and it is “holy ground.” There they sing, praise, and worship God for a short time once or twice a week in order to “enter God’s presence.” Then they leave that place, return to “normal,” and come back the next week to “enter God’s presence” again.

I have always wondered why they need to go to church to enter God’s presence. Should we not experience God’s continual presence without interruption? Are we not the temple of God? We ought never to leave God’s presence, regardless of where we are or what we are doing. In fact, if we go to a church, we ought to bring the presence of God with us for the benefit of those who experience it only temporarily once or twice a week.

The overcomers go into the temple of God and do not come out again. They are conscious of His presence all the time, even when their focus is on other things. Jesus forms the context of their lives. All of their activity is done within the framework of the will of God, their calling, and the ultimate establishment of the Kingdom.

The overcomers, as pillars of the temple, mark the place where others may enter. They are exhibited as the standard of measure, witnesses of Christ Himself, showing others by example how to enter into the place where they too may experience the continual presence of God. As such, they point the way into the temple. The two pillars in Solomon’s temple were two witnesses of the presence of Jesus Christ.

Boaz, the Pillar of Christ’s First Coming

These two pillars prophesy of the two comings of Christ. One pillar was named *Boaz*. It was named after the ancestor of David, whose story is told in the book of Ruth. Boaz was the prime example of a kinsman redeemer who was called to bring forth the heir to the lost property in Bethlehem. It was the real-life illustration of the Law of Sonship found in [Deut. 25:5–10](#).

This law prophesied of New Covenant things. Jesus came to earth as the kinsman redeemer, but he died “childless.” Therefore, according to the law, we who are His “brethren” ([Heb. 2:11](#)), are called to raise up children on behalf of our elder Brother. We are called to “*establish a name*” for our Brother ([Deut. 25:7](#)) and to “*build up [Jesus] house*” ([Deut. 25:9](#)).

The New Testament writings show that we are to be begotten by the seed of the word (gospel) in order to bring “*Christ in you*” to full birth and manifestation. This is how to fulfill that law today, and those who do so are like Boaz, which in turn is a pillar in the temple of My God.

Jachin, the Pillar of Christ’s Second Coming

The other pillar was named *Jachin*, “He will establish.” All things are established by two or three witnesses ([Deut. 19:15](#); [2 Cor. 13:1](#)). It takes two pillars to “establish” the presence of Christ in the earth. Hence, Christ came the first time as Boaz, the kinsman redeemer. The second coming, however, “establishes” His presence in the legal sense. It is not that He is absent in the full sense of the word. In fact, He has always been present in the earth from a spiritual standpoint. Yet He ascended to heaven in order to go “*to a distant country... and then return*” ([Luke 19:12](#)).

His second coming, then, “establishes” His presence in a more tangible way, and His two comings are prophesied by the law of the double witness. In fact, He has come three times, if we include His coming at Mount Sinai, where “*He came from the midst of ten thousand holy ones*” ([Deut. 33:2](#)). This is affirmed in [Jude 14](#). Hence, the law was fulfilled by two or three witnesses.

The pillars in the temple bear witness to Christ’s comings. The overcomers themselves testify by their manner of life that they are temples of God and that the presence of God is in them. On this level, the body of overcomers form the double witness of Christ’s presence. They are not part-timers as so many believers are. They do not “go to church” to

enter God's presence. They *are* the church. They go to fellowship with others and to bring God's presence to those who are lacking.

The New Names

Upon the overcomers is written "*the name of My God and the name of the city of My God.*" In Hebrew thinking, a name expressed one's nature. In the days of Solomon, the names of the pillars were Jachin and Boaz. Under the New Covenant, the overcomers express the nature of Yeshua ("salvation") and the New Jerusalem.

In [Gal. 4:22–31](#) Paul explains the difference between the Old and New Jerusalem. The earthly Jerusalem—the physical city—is not the inheritor of the Kingdom, for it is "Hagar," the bondwoman and "*is in slavery with her children*" ([Gal. 4:25](#)). Slaves are not inheritors, even if they are believers. The New Jerusalem, or prophetic "Sarah," is said to be "*our mother*" ([Gal. 4:26](#)). Jews who remain in Judaism, along with Christian Zionists, are those who claim the old Jerusalem as their mother and the capital of the Kingdom. They honor their mother and pray that she will be the mother of the chosen people. But this prayer will not be answered, for Paul writes in [Gal. 4:30](#),

³⁰ But what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be an heir with the son of the free woman."

Those who depend on the flesh, having the earthly Jerusalem as their mother, are spiritual Ishmaelites, but they are given an opportunity to claim a different mother and attain a different identity in the records of the divine court. Those who do this may receive a new name, that of the New Jerusalem, which (as we see in [Rev. 3:12](#)) is one of the marks of the overcomers.

During the Philadelphia church era (1776–1914), as the Rothschild banking system became the "guardians of the papal treasure," one of the main Rothschild goals was to establish a Jewish state in Palestine. It was precisely for this reason that the letter, known as The Balfour Declaration, was sent in 1917 by British Foreign Secretary, Lord Arthur Balfour, to Lionel Rothschild. They were working on behalf of the interests of their spiritual mother, the old Jerusalem.

To accomplish this goal, they found it necessary to work within the Christian community in order to change the Christian mindset. They induced the church to think that the Old Jerusalem would be the capital of the coming Kingdom, in order to gain Christian support for a Jewish state with an earthly temple from which place Christ would rule the earth. To indoctrinate Christians with this new view, they funded C. I. Scofield to write a Study Bible that included notes supporting a Jewish state. The tactic worked very well, and today a great many Christians mistakenly believe that the Jewish state called "Israel" is actually the fulfillment of Bible prophecies given to Israel.

Few Christians are even aware nowadays that Israel and Judah were two nations having two very different prophecies and destinies. To most of them, the terms *Jew* and *Israelite* are synonymous, and the New Jerusalem is simply the restored city of earthly Jerusalem.

Out of this situation has developed a new movement known as Christian Zionism, designed to bring Christians back into Judaism. Hence, the first-century problem that the Apostle Paul faced resurfaced in the twentieth century, making his letter to the Galatians and to the Hebrews vital once again.

It is no coincidence, then, that Christ's message to the Philadelphia church speaks of "*those of the synagogue of Satan, who say that they are Jews, and are not, but lie*" ([Rev. 3:9](#)). Jesus was putting His finger upon one of the most important problems that would develop during the Philadelphia era. The problem started with the unholy alliance between the Roman church and the Rothschild banks. It then surfaced in the evangelical and Pentecostal movements and flourished during the Laodicean church era.

Today, those who believe that anyone can become Abraham's seed by faith in Christ, according to Paul's teaching ([Gal. 3:9, 29](#)) are looked upon with horror, as if the curse of God is upon them ([Gen. 12:3](#)). Yet even Jesus Himself was not impressed with men's genealogy, for He said in [Matt. 12:48–50](#),

⁴⁸ ... “Who is My mother and who are My brothers?” ⁴⁹ And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, “Behold, My mother and My brothers! ⁵⁰ For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother.”

Overcomers, then, are known by the “name” (or nature) of the New Jerusalem, as distinct from the earthly city. Jews and Christian Zionists have a different name written on them. Perhaps they are pillars in another temple.

Chapter 4: Laodicea (1914–1993 A.D.)

[Revelation 3:14](#) begins the message to the final church:

¹⁴ And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this:

Laodicea was originally known as Diospolis, the City of Zeus. In the third century B.C., King Antiochus II (called Theos, “The Divine”) changed its name to Laodicea, after his wife Laodice. This Antiochus was the king prophesied in [Dan. 11:6](#), who, in 246 B.C., married Bernice, the daughter of Ptolemy II of Egypt, to cement a political peace. When Bernice’s father died in July of that year, Antiochus returned to his first wife, Laodice, and Bernice was sent back to Egypt. However, Laodice gave orders to murder Bernice while she was on the way to Egypt, and this was the cause of The Laodicean War between Antiochus II of Syria and Ptolemy III of Egypt.

Laodicea, then, had a colorful history. It was situated on the great east-west trade route in the lower Lycus Valley between two lofty mountain ridges. For this reason it became a major trade and banking center of the entire region and was quite rich. It was famous for its manufacture of cloth and tunics, especially those made from a soft glossy black wool. These black tunics were called *trimita*. They were so well known that many years later at the Church Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D., Laodicea was called *Trimitaria*.

About 13 miles west of Laodicea stood the temple of the Phrygian god, Men Karou, the original god of that valley. It was also the sponsor and protector of a school of medicine in Laodicea which was famous for its Phrygian Powder, ground up from Phrygian stone to make eye salve. It was also famous for an ointment made from “spice nard” that was used to strengthen the ears.

Laodicea has been called “the city of compromise,” mostly on account of its mixture of many ethnic groups in the city, which required compromise and toleration.

The city was well fortified, but its weakness lay in the fact that its principle source of water was six miles to the south. The water was brought by aqueduct to Laodicea, and any invading army would have known that to take the city, one only had to cut off its water supply. There is no longer any trace of the aqueducts. The water itself was lukewarm by the time it arrived in Laodicea. Likewise, cold water piped from Colossae, too, was lukewarm by the time it arrived in Laodicea.

A friend of mine took a trip to Turkey and later sent me this picture of the lukewarm springs at Laodicea.



Picture taken by Mark Shoberg

The Amen

The glorified Christ introduces Himself to the church of Laodicea as “*The Amen, the faithful and true witness, the Beginning of the creation of God.*” This refers to [Isaiah 65:16–18](#),

¹⁶ Because he who is blessed in the earth shall be blessed by the God of truth [Heb. *Amen*]; and he who swears in the earth [in court] shall swear by the God of truth [*Amen*] ... ¹⁷ For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth ... ¹⁸ I create Jerusalem for rejoicing ...

The Hebrew word *amen*, “faith,” is closely related to *amet*, “truth.” Amen was how a man responded when taking an oath to tell the whole truth in a court of law. (See [Deut. 28:15–26](#).) Those taking such solemn oaths were held accountable if they committed perjury, for if they lied under those circumstances, they committed blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. (An example of this is found in the story of Ananias and Sapphira in [Acts 5:4](#).)

In Greek thinking, faith is more akin to positive thinking or to confidence in religion. Unfortunately, this definition of faith has found fertile ground in the modern church as well. But in Hebrew thought, faith was a spiritual response to truth, or bearing witness of the truth. In connection with this, the Spirit of the Fear of the Lord is important, for blasphemy is deterred by having respect toward God when bearing witness of truth.

For this reason also, the seventh Spirit of the Lord—the One giving this message to Laodicea—is the Fear of the Lord ([Isaiah 11:2](#)). In other words, to be an overcomer in the Laodicea church is to have ears to hear the Spirit of the Fear of the Lord. Those who hear are those who truly bear witness to the truth in a time of universal deception. Their lives, too, are lived by the Amen principle, saying only what they hear their Father say, and doing only what they see their Father do. By becoming the Amen of God, the overcomers may participate in the creation of the new heavens, the new earth, and the new Jerusalem.

The first heavens and the first earth were created in the same manner. The Father spoke “Light,” and the Son said, “So let it be” (i.e., *Amen*). All things are established by a double witness, and hence it took both Father and Son to create all things, along with a third witness, the Holy Spirit. Therefore, John tells us in [John 1:3](#),

³ All things came into being by [*dia*, “through”] Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

Creation came into being through Christ, the Logos, who was the Amen of God. John's message is to show that Jesus Christ was not only present at the time of creation, but He was not left out of the creative process in even the smallest detail.

The same principle is seen also in creating the new heavens and the new earth, where the Amen again is central to creation. This time, the overcomers are called to be Amen people (like Christ Himself), bearing witness of the creative word to restore the earth to its original glory and purpose. Nonetheless, as we have seen with the earlier churches, only a few actually qualify as overcomers. All of the churches (as a whole) fail to follow the Spirit's message and warning.

The Lukewarm Church

[Revelation 3:15, 16](#) says,

¹⁵ I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I would that you were cold or hot. ¹⁶ So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth.

The lukewarm water of Laodicea provided the metaphor for the church's relationship with God. It was not a requirement for them to become fanatical or obnoxious in witnessing for Christ. The focus was upon the compromising church. I noticed long ago that the Laodicea church of the twentieth century generally has followed the world's views of morality and culture. They only lag behind the world by a few years. The world sets the example of so-called "truth," and the church soon adjusts its view to conform to the beast's world view.

Standing firm in the truth of God does not need to be done in an obnoxious manner. Neither does an Amen person need to be so fanatical as to kill or harm others in defense of the truth. God only requires that believers take the lead and influence the world around them, rather than having the world influence them. Believers are not the world's amen people; they are God's Amen. We do not adopt the world's moral (or immoral) standards, but live according to Kingdom culture and morality.

Those in the church who are lukewarm in this matter will be spit out of God's mouth, unless they repent. They either need to take Christ seriously or stop pretending to be Christians.

Church Blindness

In [Rev. 3:17, 18](#) Christ advises the church of Laodicea,

¹⁷ Because you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind, and naked, ¹⁸ I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire, that you may become rich, and white garments, that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and eyesalve to anoint your eyes, that you may see.

The first thing to note is that the church was blind to its true condition. It believed itself to be rich, because it measured riches in monetary terms, not seeing things through God's eyes and with His perspective. Secondly, the church was naked—again, without realizing it. In short, this church was in captivity to Babylon and had adopted the Babylonian world view, while thinking it was seeing things as God saw them.

The worst feature of spiritual blindness is that the one who is blind does not know it. Because he sees with his physical eyes and can imagine things with his soulish eyes, he believes that he can see spiritually as well. Perhaps the foremost problem is that he cannot distinguish between his spirit and his soul, nor between faith and positive thinking.

In [Matt. 6:22, 23](#) Jesus speaks of such blindness, saying,

²² The lamp of the body is the eye; if therefore your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. ²³ But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

Israel of old was also blind. Even after Israel had been tested in the wilderness under Moses for forty years, the prophet told them in [Deut. 29:4, 5](#),

⁴ Yet to this day the Lord has not given you a heart to know, nor eyes to see, nor ears to hear. ⁵ And I have led you forty years in the wilderness ...

During the first year of Israel's wilderness journey, Moses had to put a veil over his face, because the people were not prepared to see the glory of God—that is, to know Truth fully. Paul says in [2 Cor. 3:14, 15](#),

¹⁴ But their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remained unlifted, because it is removed in Christ. ¹⁵ But to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart.

This veil did not blind Moses' eyes, but rather it blinded the people from seeing the glory of God in Moses' face. Paul tells us that the veil is the result of the Old Covenant mindset, which blinds the people and hides the truth from them.

It appears that the same veil had come upon the eyes of the Laodicea church as it began to forsake the New Covenant and adopt the carnal rituals and perspectives of the Old Covenant. Yet because their practices were religious in nature, they did not know that they were spiritually blind. They could not tell the difference between true spiritual things and ordinary religious views and activities.

Of course, God took credit for bringing about this condition. [Isaiah 29:9, 10](#) says,

⁹ Be delayed and wait. Blind yourselves and be blind. They become drunk, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink. ¹⁰ For the Lord has poured over you a spirit of deep sleep; He has shut your eyes, the prophets; and He has covered your heads, the seers.

In other words, God commanded the people to blind themselves, and they did so. God thus poured over them a spirit of deep sleep, shutting their eyes and covering their heads. This seems to be inherent in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit—that is, in Pentecost.

The Pentecostal Movement

In the final years of the Philadelphia church, the Holy Spirit was poured out from 1900–1914, giving rise to the modern Pentecostal movement. It was the church's final opportunity to repent and thereby avoid the captivity that was soon to come. A few did, but their numbers were insufficient to prevent the captivity of the Laodicea church which began in 1914.

Here is where it again is important to understand how King Saul was a Pentecostal type of the church, having been crowned on the day of "wheat harvest," later known as Pentecost ([1 Sam. 12:17](#)). The main problem with Saul was that the people wanted a man to rule over them, rather than being ruled directly by God (Christ). Hence, the main problem of Pentecost was the spirit of denominationalism, where men rule the people through religion, rather than being ruled directly by Jesus Christ and being led by the Spirit.

In the early 1900's the Pentecostal movement was almost fully denominationalized between 1909 and 1912. They followed the pattern of the Israelites who had demanded a king, and as a result the captivity was ensured. With this came "*a spirit of deep sleep*," as Isaiah tells us. An Old Covenant way of thinking settled into the movement. In their ignorance of the law, combined with their desire for holiness, they became legalistic, establishing standards about outward things that were not mandated in the divine law but were rather just the traditions of men.

They also began to support Jewish Zionism's claim to the "Holy Land," and their terrorist methods of gaining control. They began to believe that it was in God's will to support the genocide and expulsion of the existing Palestinian peoples as if they were Canaanites being destroyed by Joshua under the Old Covenant. They began to interpret Scripture by Old Covenant thinking, focusing upon externals, rather than upon matters of the heart.

One of the main keys to such blindness was their belief that one's genealogical descent from Abraham made a person "chosen," regardless of his lack of faith in Christ. In so doing, they overthrew a great portion of Paul's teaching, in particular Galatians and the book of Hebrews. The result was that the Laodicea church gave its inheritance to Jews who yet hated Jesus Christ. Putting it another way, the Laodicea church became enslaved to Mystery Babylon. Paul's warning not to allow "false brethren" to "bring us into bondage" to the Old Covenant ([Gal. 2:4](#)) went unheeded.

Even as the Hezekiah church prepared the way for the Captivity church under the Old Covenant, so also the Philadelphia church prepared the way for the Laodicea church to go into captivity.

In God's mercy, He blinded the eyes of the church so that they would not realize what they were doing. Blindness lessened their accountability. Sleep seemed to shorten their days in captivity. They could enjoy the blessings of the Holy Spirit, healings, and miracles without being encumbered by truth.

During this captivity to Mystery Babylon, the church has thought of itself as being rich. There is little doubt that Babylon brought apparent prosperity to the West, though most of it was at the expense of third-world countries. Most people were unaware that the Federal Reserve Act had given the power to create money to a few powerful banking families. These were happy to give credit to governments, who issued bonds (debt notes) in exchange for newly-created money. With all this newly-created money at their disposal, they had the appearance of wealth and tried to forget that every new dollar was actually a debt note that had been monetized, as it were, by magic.

The church prospered and said, "*I am rich and have become wealthy.*" In the 1950's the age of mega-churches was born, and men marveled at these new Charismatic Cathedrals that were even greater than the Roman Catholic cathedrals of past centuries.

Along with this rise in wealth came the power of positive thinking, whose roots lay in the writings of Charles Filmore during the early days of the Pentecostal movement. Filmore pretended to be a Christian, and even used biblical terms, but he redefined them according to his Metaphysical Dictionary, which he entitled, The Revealing Word. Sin was redefined as ignorance. The cross was redefined as "that state of consciousness termed 'mortal mind'." Faith became positive thinking. God became impersonal. Our relationship to God was bound up in our ability to derive wealth by thinking positively and by the power of sowing and reaping. Spiritual laws were just useful tools in an impersonal "field" that were used to acquire wealth and happiness.

Both the Pentecostal and the Metaphysical movements were birthed at the same time in the early 1900's. Norman Vincent Peale popularized the Metaphysical movement in his book, The Power of Positive Thinking, and others brought this into the church with minor adjustments. The result is that the church of Laodicea no longer had the ability to discern between the soulish and the spiritual. The law of sowing and reaping was used often to defraud the people, as preachers told them to "sow" into their ministries in order to receive God's blessing. Some of these ministries became very wealthy; most of the people remained poor.

God's Answer

God advised the church "*to buy from Me gold refined by fire, that you may become rich*" ([Rev. 3:18](#)). He was referring to [1 Peter 1:6, 7](#), which says,

⁶ In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, ⁷ that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Faith is compared to physical gold (or wealth in general). Even as gold is refined by fire, so also is our faith refined “by various trials.” Hence, Christ was telling the Laodicea church that they ought to seek genuine faith that is proven and tested by experience. Since “*faith comes by hearing the word*” ([Rom. 10:17](#)), it is clear that refined faith comes by putting it to the test—that is, by applying the revelation of the word experientially.

This is why [Rev. 3:19](#) says,

¹⁹ Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; be zealous therefore, and repent.

God’s discipline is the “fire” that tests our faith and refines it to the point where it actually works. Many have faith that is not yet practical or useful in real life. What is lacking is the refinement process.

It is not enough to learn the word or even to hear God’s voice. The word must bring about an active response in order for it to be refined and usable. The foundational difference between Metaphysical Christianity and True Christianity is this: Metaphysical Christians decide for themselves what they want, or what is good for them, and then they use positive thinking to fulfill their goals. True faith hears God’s voice, determines His will, and then seeks to put that into experience. False Christianity begins with man’s will; true Christianity begins by seeking God’s will.

It is surprisingly difficult for even Christians to understand the difference. Gold (or money itself) is not the difference. The difference is *whose will is being done*. Let us buy true gold and not rely upon the world’s fools gold.

Buying White Garments

The second piece of advice that Christ gave to the Laodicea church in [Rev. 3:18](#) was to buy “white garments.” Such garments can only be purchased with Kingdom currency—the “*gold refined by fire*” mentioned previously. White garments are made of “*fine linen*” which “*is the righteous acts of the saints*” ([Rev. 19:8](#)). These are the garments required to minister to God in the sanctuary ([Lev. 16:23](#)). Such garments are worn by those who do the works of God, doing only what they see their Father do.

The stated purpose for buying such garments is “*that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed*” (or exposed). This refers to the time of Adam and Eve, when they were “naked” after they sinned. In [Gen. 3:10](#) Adam told God, “*I was afraid because I was naked.*” From then on, nakedness was a Hebrew idiom for sin being fully exposed and hidden things being manifested ([2 Cor. 5:3](#)).

Since Laodicea was known for its cloth industry and its manufacture of tunics, everyone reading this advice in John’s time would have recognized the irony inherent in this advice. Even as one could choose earthly or heavenly “gold,” so also could men choose between earthly and heavenly clothing.

Eyesalve

The third thing that Christ counseled the church to buy was “*eyesalve to anoint your eyes.*” Once again, Laodicea was known for its eyesalve made of Phrygian powder, and hence there was earthly and heavenly eyesalve. Phrygian powder was used to heal physical eyes, but one needed heavenly gold to purchase heavenly eyesalve that could heal spiritual blindness.

The implication is that heavenly gold, which is faith refined by the baptism of fire, must be obtained in order to remove the blindness upon the Laodicea church. It is ironic, then, that in spite of the Pentecostal revival that occurred at the end of the Philadelphia church era, the Laodicea church was blind and did not realize it.

It is precisely because Christians have received Christ, and Pentecostals have received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, that they cannot comprehend how they could be blind to the word of God and to what is happening around them. It seems inconceivable to them. It is as incomprehensible as it was with the religious leaders in Jesus’ day.

Yet Jesus healed blind eyes in order to show us that He is also the only Source of healing for spiritual eyes. In John 9 we read the story of a man who had been born blind ([John 9:1](#)) and how Jesus healed him. This was the sixth out of eight miracle-signs in the gospel of John, which correlate with the eight days of the feast of Tabernacles.

The blind man was healed when he washed off the clay which Jesus had placed upon his eyes. The clay represents the flesh, because we are all “clay” in the hands of the Potter. [Isaiah 64:8](#) says,

⁸ But now, O Father, Thou art our Father; we are the clay, and Thou art our potter; and all of us are the work of Thy hand.

In putting clay upon the eyes of the blind man ([John 9:6](#)), Jesus acted as Creator making the vessels of clay. In telling him to wash off the clay, Jesus gave instructions on how to be set free of blindness. In that this was one of the signs correlating with the feast of Tabernacles, it also shows that blindness is healed, not in Pentecost, but in Tabernacles. The power of the Spirit operating in Pentecost has healed many blind eyes, but to heal spiritual eyes is done only through the power of Tabernacles. Hence, those who are enlightened to see the truth in the word have tapped into the power of Tabernacles.

This is the promise given to the overcomers. The typical result is that they are excommunicated from the religious system, even as the blind man was put out of the synagogue ([John 9:34](#)). The blind do not want those who are healed to bear witness of the truth, lest the light force the people to admit their blindness and wound their pride.

Paul speaks of such blindness in terms of the veil that is over the eyes of those who read the writings of Moses by the dim light of the Old Covenant ([2 Cor. 3:14, 15](#)). Later, he says in [2 Cor. 4:3, 4](#),

³ And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, ⁴ in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

He goes on in verses 6 and 7 to compare us with Gideon’s army, which carried earthen vessels from which the light shone when they were broken:

⁶ For God, who said, “Light shall shine out of darkness,” is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. ⁷ But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves.

All true believers have the light of Christ in them, but until their clay vessels are broken, the light remains hidden, or veiled. Blindness, then, is seen in two or three kinds of people: (1) those who have Old Covenant eyes and limited understanding, (2) “unbelievers” in general, and (3) those believers whose clay has not been washed away—or clay vessels that have not been broken.

To some extent all retain some degree of blindness until the day that the sons of God are “manifested,” or unveiled. Nonetheless, the overcomers are given a foretaste of Tabernacles even during the ages of Passover and Pentecost.

In [2 Cor. 5:1–4](#) Paul likens this manifestation to a change of clothing. This connects the theme of “white garments” to the removal of blindness and the spiritual eyesalve that the church was supposed to purchase in [Rev. 3:18](#).

Divine Discipline

[Revelation 3:19](#) continues,

¹⁹ Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; be zealous therefore, and repent.

Discipline is one thing that the church (as an organization) does not like—unless they are the ones doing the disciplining. Discipline is never a happy time, but [Heb. 12:11](#) says,

¹¹ All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

This assumes, of course, that such discipline is received with humility, so that one's clay vessel may be "broken" to shine forth the light that is in it. Scripture warns, however, that some remain stubborn and rebellious, refusing to be corrected by such discipline ([Deut. 21:18](#)). Of such, [Heb. 12:8](#) says,

⁸ But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.

In other words, we are all "*partakers*" of divine discipline, but some remain "*without discipline*." These are proven to be "*illegitimate children and not sons*." One's response to divine discipline ultimately proves one's status (inheritor or non-inheritor) in the family of God.

Christ Stands at the Door

[Revelation 3:20](#) says,

²⁰ Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me.

This word is given specifically to the Laodicea church, because it is the last of the seven churches prior to His return. But this also has a personal, individual appeal, saying, "*if anyone hears My voice and opens the door*." Since blindness and deafness go hand in hand, when one's spiritual eyes are healed, so also are one's ears healed. Such is the mark of an overcomer, who has been touched by the feast of Tabernacles.

To "dine" with someone (in Hebrew thought) is to have fellowship, or communion. Western culture has some elements of this concept of communion, but nowhere near the level of significance found in Scripture. Paul alludes to this in [1 Cor. 5:11](#), telling the believers not to eat with those who, as a normal manner of life, habitually live in sin. To "*eat*" is the equivalent of "*not to keep company*" with such people.

This does not mean believers must shun such people, but rather that the level of our association with such people should not be so close that they change or influence our Kingdom life style. For each individual, this should be applied according to the strength and maturity of the believer. In that way, believers may continue to be witnesses of Christ in a lawless world.

The Overcomer's Reward

[Revelation 3:21](#) says,

²¹ He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

Christ has already presented Himself to the Laodicea church in terms of being "the Amen" of God, by which all things are created. This speaks of the authority of the double witness, where the first witness comes from heaven and the second from the earth. The first witness comes from the *Sovereign* God, while the second comes from one with *authority*. Sovereignty is self-derived, while authority is authorized by a higher power.

At the end of the message, the Laodicea church is invited to identify with Christ in His throne. Only the overcomers themselves actually achieve this, but the offer is extended to all. There is a Scriptural path that a prospective overcomer

must follow. First, one must identify with Christ in His death in order to identify in His resurrection life ([Rom. 6:5](#)). Only then can one qualify to be identified in His ascension to the throne, where spiritual authority is granted.

The gap between resurrection life and ascension is filled with divine discipline and intercession and is given incrementally according to the will of God alone. (See my book, [Principles of Intercession](#), which shows the five steps toward spiritual authority.) Jesus followed this path and established the pattern for us all to follow in His footsteps.

Illegitimate sons need not apply.

[Revelation 3:22](#) concludes,

²² He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

This concludes the message to the seven churches.

Chapter 5: The Transition

The transfer of authority to the saints of the Most High follows two main biblical pattern-themes. The longest of the two cycles is a period of “seven times,” which is 2,520 years. This involves God’s contract to take the Dominion Mandate from the kings of Judah and to give it to beast systems. This contract began to come to an end in 2014.

The shorter pattern involves the church under its Pentecostal contract. This cycle was only 1,960 years in length, a period of 40 Jubilees (40 x 49). The biblical pattern was established by King Saul, who reigned 40 years before God removed the house of Saul and established the house of David.

Both of these patterns are important in understanding the present transition of authority.

Saul’s Pentecostal Pattern

The Laodicea church era ended on Pentecost, May 30, 1993, forty Jubilees after the day of Pentecost in [Acts 2:1](#). The shift from Pentecost to Tabernacles began. Up to that point, the church under Pentecost had had in its hands the authority to bring righteousness into the world. The church as a whole was God’s Judge, but unfortunately, it was a corrupt judge that sought money and power instead of righteousness. Hence, it failed, as history shows, for when its allotted time was completed, the world was still enslaved, groaning under unrighteous leaders.

King Saul reigned forty years, and then he died, and authority began to shift to David. Prophetically speaking, “Saul” died on May 30, 1993. This launched a 7½ year cycle according to the biblical pattern of transition from Saul to David.

We know that David replaced Saul as king, but his authority came to him incrementally. [2 Sam. 5:4](#), [5](#) tells us,

⁴ David was thirty years old when he became king, and he reigned forty years. ⁵ At Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years over all Israel and Judah.

We took note of this in 1993, understanding that the overcomers (i.e., the “David” company) had received partial authority and would have to wait for 7½ years to receive full spiritual authority for the Tabernacles age to come. Hence, full authority was granted on November 30, 2000, which is 7½ years from May 30, 1993.

How did this take place? What signs confirmed this view? The stories are written in my book, [The Wars of the Lord](#), and they are too long to include here. The important thing is to understand that the transfer of authority from Pentecost to Tabernacles (or from the church to the overcomers) started in 1993 and was completed in 2000.

The Greater Transfer of Authority

The transfer of authority from the church to the overcomers from 1993–2000 was only the first step. It was a major turning point, but it was limited to the authority that had been given to the church. Although the corrupted church became the little horn of the beast system, it did not represent the entire beast system.

In order to give the overcomers the complete authority to reign with Christ on the earth, it was necessary to wait until God’s contract with the beast systems ended in 2014. Only then could the overcomers receive the full authority promised to them in [Dan. 7:22](#), [27](#), when “*judgment [the decree, court ruling] was passed in favor of the saints of the Highest One, and the time arrived when the saints took possession of the kingdom.*”

As I explained in greater detail in my books on Daniel, Babylon’s mandate was for a set period of “seven times” (7 x 360 years). This would have ended in 1914 at the end of the Philadelphia church era, except that the third “beast” (Grecian empire) had been deprived of its final century of rule from 163–63 B.C. after Antiochus Epiphanes desecrated the temple in Jerusalem.

Hence, that missing century had to be added to the end of the time allotted to these “beast” nations. This means that the time of the beasts of Babylon did not end until 2014.

So there were actually two transfers of authority in recent years. The first was a transfer of authority from the church to the overcomers (or from Pentecost to Tabernacles) from 1993 to 2000. This transfer of authority made it possible for the overcomers to take the authority away from the Babylonian beast system in order to set the whole world free.

The precise date for this second transfer of authority occurred on the eighth day of Tabernacles, Oct. 16, 2014. However, we were then reminded of the law of redemption rights in [Lev. 25:30](#), and realized that we would have to be patient for another year. The law gives a former owner a full year in which to redeem his property—if he were able to do so. Hence, we had to wait until the end of 2015 to begin to exercise the full authority that had been given to the overcomers.

This time of court cases and warfare are now finished, setting us up for the events of 2016, which the prophets call the “Year of the Wind.” We believe that 2016 will see the wind of the Holy Spirit begin to blow across the earth.

The Fall of Babylon

We expect to see the wind of God begin to blow against the economic debt-money system that Babylon established. The events leading up to this great fall of Babylon are described in greater detail in Revelation 16.

God has raised up “*the kings from the east*” ([Rev. 16:12](#)) to overthrow Babylon, even as He raised up King Cyrus of Persia and King Darius of Media in the days of Daniel. We now have new “kings” coming from China and Russia. God has raised them up as His servants ([Isaiah 44:28](#), [45:1](#)) to execute His decrees and set us free from Mystery Babylon.

Most of the church misunderstands the divine purpose for these “kings,” interpreting [Rev. 16:12](#) in a negative way. They think these “kings” will march across Asia in order to invade Israel. Hence, they treat these “kings from the east” as enemies of God, rather than as God’s agents in overthrowing Babylon.

But history shows that these modern “kings” are fulfilling the same role and purpose that Cyrus and Darius fulfilled in the overthrow of the original city of Babylon. Cyrus the Persian and Darius the Mede were the two original “*kings from the east*” whom God raised up to overthrow Babylon. Cyrus was literally called a “messiah” in [Isaiah 45:1](#), and Darius reorganized the kingdom into 120 “satraps” (or provinces).

The number 120 speaks of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Darius also put Daniel in charge as the kingdom’s top commissioner ([Dan. 6:2](#), [3](#)), setting the pattern for the overcomers ruling under Christ.

Hence, we see that God has answered the prayers of the overcomers by raising up China and Russia as His agents to overthrow the old Babylonian order. Those who believe that God has indeed given a favorable ruling to the overcomers will have faith to know that God is NOT using China and Russia to destroy us, but to set us free. In fact, this is the outworking of our Jubilee Prayer Campaign in 1993. It is to give the world a Jubilee, cancel all debts, and set them free during the Tabernacles Age for the next thousand years.

Those who identify with Mystery Babylon may have reason to fear, because they have attached themselves to the world’s system. The church’s misunderstanding of prophecy tends to generate fear in the church as well. Certainly, the rulers of Babylon are fearful, for they know that their time is short, and yet most of them refuse to repent. But those who identify with the Kingdom of God have reason to rejoice. In [Luke 21:28](#), after prophesying about the end of the age, Jesus says to His followers,

²⁸ But when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.

I conclude, then, with a word from Christ that was given to me through a friend in 1982 during the difficult time at the start of my second life: **“Walk always in faith, never in fear.”**

Chapter 6: After These Things

The fourth chapter of the book of Revelation correlates with the fourth letter of the Hebrew alphabet: *daleth*, “an open door.” It begins with [Rev. 4:1](#),

¹ After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me, said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things.”

It says, “*After these things*.” After what things? It refers to the time after the seven churches. But as we have seen, there is more than one level of interpretation in regard to the seven churches. The most immediate understanding is that “after these things” means “*after these revelations that were given to John*,” Christ spoke to John himself, inviting him to come higher in the realm of the Spirit, in order to receive a greater revelation of things to come.

When we understand the seven churches to be seven eras in church history, it does not stretch the imagination to say that this open door was to be presented to those living in the post-Laodicea era. Therefore, we can say that “*after these things*” refers to any time beyond May 30, 1993, which was the end of the 40 Jubilee cycles of the seven prophetic churches.

I know something about this open door from personal experience, because shortly after the end of the Pentecostal age, the word of the Lord came, instructing me to issue my first “call to arms” in order to lead the Jubilee Prayer Campaign in November of 1993.

My own life has been somewhat of a prophetic pattern subjected to these long-term cycles. In previous years (during the final 12 years of the Laodicean era) I was trained in the areas of intercession and spiritual warfare. During that time, God held me back, for my ministry pertained to the next Age, which did not begin until “Saul” died in 1993. I made many mistakes during those training years, as we all do, but I learned far more from my mistakes than from any successes that I may have had.

In fact, it was necessary to make those mistakes, because most of them were mistakes that the Pentecostal realm has made over the years, often without realizing what they were doing. In moving from one Age to another, I started out with the same blindness that afflicted Laodicea and began to be healed as the revelation of God stirred within me and opened my eyes to the big picture of the divine plan.

One thing clearly emerged from that training time: the mistakes were always rooted in my ignorance or misperception of the law. I learned that the law was not merely a moral boundary, but an entire way of life subjected to the leading of the Holy Spirit. More than this, *the law prophesies*, because it reveals the divine plan for the earth, His judgments, and His vows to intervene in history to save mankind.

In that sense, I could personalize [Rev. 4:1](#) and apply it to my own ministry and calling in life. “After these things” (1993) a door opened in heaven, as if to invite me to “come up here,” so that He could show me “*what must take place after these things*.” The Jubilee Prayer Campaign did indeed open the floodgates of revelation about the overthrow of Mystery Babylon and the Kingdom of God.

The Harpazo

Many Bible teachers identify [Rev. 4:1](#) as the “rapture of the saints,” seeing the invitation to “*come up here*” as a prophecy of the rapture at the end of the Church Age. However, none of the rapture teachers had any real knowledge of the feast of Tabernacles, and so this teaching was developed in ignorance of the most important foundational prophecies that speak of Christ’s second coming. Their teaching, then, was inevitably warped.

Without understanding Tabernacles, it is not possible to have a clear picture of prophecy regarding the second coming of Christ and the “catching away” (Greek: *harpazo*; Latin: *rapto*) of the saints.

It was not until about 1950 that any serious study of Tabernacles was made in the context of the New Covenant. Prior to the publication of George Warnock’s book, [The Feast of Tabernacles](#), in 1952, most studies had been by Jews who viewed it through the lens of the Old Covenant. Few understood that the two sets of feast days (April-May and September-October) prophesied of the two works of Christ.

Bible teachers have long known, of course, that Christ died to fulfill the feast of Passover, was raised from the dead and presented to the Father on the wave-sheaf offering, and that the feast of Pentecost was fulfilled in Acts 2 with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In each case, the timing of the feast day established the date of its fulfillment.

However, for some reason they did not take this further in regard to the second set of feast days. The feast of Trumpets (Rosh Hoshana) prophesies of the resurrection of the dead saints. The Day of Atonement prophesies of the church’s repentance for its lack of faith.

The first day of Tabernacles prophesies of the transformation (“change,” [1 Cor. 15:51](#)) of the overcomers who are alive during that time. The middle of Tabernacles prophesies of Christ’s coming in order to unite the Head with the Body of the New Creation Man. The eighth day of Tabernacles is the actual *harpazo*, the “catching away” of these saints. They are then presented to the Father as the “sons of God.”

The presentation is the official occasion where the saints are *recognized* by the courts of heaven and are *empowered* with the full authority that their legal position requires to do their work on earth. Then these sons of God will return to be “manifested” in the earth.

Each step is laid out in the second set of feast days. Those who developed the “rapture” idea without understanding the feast days tended to lump all of these events together and to place a seven-year tribulation between the *harpazo* and the return of Christ to rule the earth. They did not understand that the tribulation of Israel was to last “seven times,” or 7 x 360 years, as explained in Daniel 7 and in Revelation 13. (See [Daniel, Prophet of the Ages, Book 2.](#))

Understanding the feasts of the Lord is crucial to understanding the book of Revelation, for in the past 150 years this book has been understood in the context of the “rapture” theory and the Futurist interpretation of the book of Revelation. Prior to the mid-1800’s, the book was understood predominantly by the Historicist view (which is my own approach as well).

The Throne

[Revelation 4:2](#) says,

² Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne.

When John was invited to “*come up here*,” he was caught up “*in the Spirit*.” That is, his spirit was transported to heaven to the throne of God. We all have more than one consciousness. Normally, we perceive things through the soul’s consciousness (or conscious awareness). Our spirit also has a mind (conscious awareness) of its own that is separate from that of the soul.

John had an out-of-body experience. There is no reason to believe that his body was transported to heaven. His soul, too, remained with his body. His heavenly visit involved only his spirit, that is, his spiritual seat of consciousness.

Even so, as many have learned by experience, there is a “window” that connects the soul to the spirit, allowing the soul to see (to the best of its ability) that which the spirit communicates to the soul. The soul’s conscious recollection,

then, allows one's earthly faculties to remember and to record the events using bodily tools (i.e., one's hands for writing). Hence, spirit, soul, and body are designed to work together in order to bring heaven to earth.

So John was taken to the throne room. The One sitting on the throne is not immediately identified, but the words of the 24 elders in [Rev. 4:11](#), and again in [Rev. 5:9](#), indicates that it is Jesus Christ.

Chapter 7: Two Stones and a Rainbow

[Revelation 4:3](#) describes Him,

³ And He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance.

How is it that the One sitting on the throne in heaven “*was like a jasper stone*”? Why was this metaphor used here? The term *jasper* literally means “speckled stone.” Jasper is a translucent stone, most commonly red on account of its iron content. Iron has an atomic weight of 26, which is also the numeric value of Yahweh. John himself would not have known anything about atomic weights, but all things were created by the word and therefore contain hidden revelation.

But jasper can also be yellow or green. In fact, green jasper has often been compared to emerald, so this also seems to be connected to the rainbow that appears as an “emerald.” A green jasper stone set in a gold ring is pictured here from the Walters Art Museum:

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jasper>

Jasper was one of the twelve stones in the high priest’s breastplate ([Exodus 28:20](#)). It was the third stone in the fourth row. In other words, it was the last stone representing the twelve sons of Jacob “*according to their birth*” ([Exodus 28:10](#)). Benjamin was the twelfth son of Jacob.

The Hebrew word translated “jasper” is *yasfeh*. The Greek translation (Septuagint) uses the Greek term *laspis*, which was the term normally reserved for *green* jasper. *Laspis* was the most prized form of jasper in ancient times.

Somehow, the One sitting on the throne identifies Himself with (green) jasper and thus also with Benjamin. Green itself speaks of life and/or resurrection. The story of Benjamin’s birth prophesies of the two works of Christ. [Gen. 35:16–18](#) tells the story:

¹⁶ Then they journeyed from Bethel; and when there was still some distance to go to Ephrath, Rachel began to give birth and she suffered severe labor. ¹⁷ And it came about when she was in severe labor that the midwife said to her, “Do not fear, for now you have another son.” ¹⁸ And it came about as her soul was departing (for she died), that she named him Ben-oni; but his father called him Benjamin.

This son had two names. His mother called him Ben-oni, “son of my sorrow.” Christ came the first time as “*a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief*” ([Isaiah 53:3](#)). His father called him Benjamin, “son of my right hand.” So Christ comes the second time as the Lord of Heaven, seated at the right hand of His heavenly Father ([Heb. 10:12](#)).

In each case, Christ’s position on the throne in heaven is explained first by green jasper, which is then reflected as an emerald rainbow, and secondly in the revelation of Ben-oni/Benjamin. Together, the jasper stone suggests that the One sitting on the throne had been raised from the dead after becoming a “man of sorrows,” and that He was now seated at the right hand of the Father (“Benjamin”).

Sardius is a Ruby

The second stone in [Rev. 4:3](#) is the sardius. The sardius (not to be confused with *sardonyx*) is what we know today as a ruby.

It was the first stone on the high priest’s breastplate in [Exodus 28:17](#). In that verse the KJV renders it “sardius,” but the NASB translates it “ruby.” Even as a jasper was the last stone in the breastplate (representing Benjamin, the last

son of Jacob), the ruby was the first stone in the breastplate representing Reuben, “Behold the Son.” When Jacob blessed his twelve sons, he began with Reuben, saying in [Gen. 49:3](#),

³ Reuben, you are my firstborn; my might and the beginning of my strength ...

Pictured together, we are reminded of the description of Christ in [Rev. 1:8](#), “*the Alpha and the Omega*.” This is repeated at the end of the book in [Rev. 21:6](#) and again in 22:13, which reads,

¹³ I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.

In other words, He is the first and the last gemstone in the breastplate of the high priest. When John first bore witness of Jesus as the Christ, he said in [John 1:29](#), “*Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*.” This announcement is suggested in the name Reuben, “Behold the Son,” and also in the idea that Christ was to be “*the first-born of all creation*” ([Col. 1:15](#)) and “*the firstborn from the dead*” ([Col. 1:18](#)). This is the passage which speaks of the reconciliation of all creation, He being the first-born from the dead, followed by all of creation.

The blood-red ruby is a fitting symbol of the blood of Christ that was to be shed in His first work. The jasper, in the big picture, represents the second work of Christ. Yet when the two stones are viewed in the tight view of Christ’s first work, the ruby represents His death, and the jasper (green *lapis*) represents His resurrection. Either way we view the stones, they picture the two works of Christ and involve the two-fold process of death and life.

Without understanding the color and symbolism of these stones, it would be difficult to see how the One sitting on the heavenly throne could be like mere stones. The metaphor is odd until we know the prophetic meaning of each gemstone and their placement on the breastplate.

The Emerald Rainbow

The Emerald was the third stone in the high priest’s breastplate, representing Levi, the third son of Jacob ([Gen. 29:34](#)). Levi’s name means “joiner,” from the root word *lava*, “attached.” According to Gesenius’ Hebrew Lexicon, Levi means “adhesion, garland, or crown.”

So the emerald, picturing Levi, is seen in the single-colored rainbow over the throne, positioned as a crown or garland. It also pictures the unity of two being joined together. [Col. 1:17](#) says that “*in Him all things hold together*.” The rainbow thus joins God with His creation. This can have many applications, but in the broadest picture, we see God and “the all” (*ta panta*) being reconciled through the ministry of Levi. The ministry of a true Levite is “*the ministry of reconciliation*” ([2 Cor. 5:18](#)), which brings unity between God and “all things.”

This is best pictured in [Col. 1:15–20](#),

¹⁵ And He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation [Reuben]. ¹⁶ For by Him all things [*ta panta*, “the all”] were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created by Him and for Him. ¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together [Levi]. ¹⁸ He is also the head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning [Reuben], the firstborn from the dead [ruby] so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything.

The divine purpose, then, is to reconcile all things (*ta panta*), which is the same *ta panta* that was created at the beginning. [Col. 1:19](#), [20](#) concludes,

¹⁹ For it was the Father’s good pleasure for all the fulness to dwell in Him, ²⁰ and through Him to reconcile all things [*ta panta*] to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

The overall purpose of God, then, is pictured in the stones of the breastplate. Christ is Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. He is the first and the last stone in the breastplate, joined together by Levi through the (emerald) ministry of reconciliation. Like the *laspis* (green jasper), the emerald is green, signifying life that comes through the New Covenant. The Old Covenant is “*the ministry of death*” ([2 Cor. 3:7](#)), but the New Covenant is “*the ministry of the Spirit*” (3:8), and “*gives life*” (3:6).

In fact, the first rainbow represented God’s promise to the whole earth ([Gen. 9:13](#)). This passage (9:9) is the first time that the word “covenant” is used in Scripture. In the previous verse, which introduces this entire passage, Noah’s name is mentioned for the 32nd time in Genesis. Thirty-two is the biblical number that means “covenant.” See my book, [The Biblical Meaning of Numbers from one to Forty](#).

In that this was an unconditional covenant (promise or vow) that God made by Himself, it was the clearest New Covenant oath that God had recorded in Scripture up to that time. Therefore, the rainbow itself represented the New Covenant, and so it is not surprising to see a rainbow over the throne of God in [Rev. 4:3](#).

John saw the throne of God while he was in the Spirit. Every detail was a heavenly or spiritual principle that was supposed to be duplicated physically on the earth, particularly in the tabernacle of Moses and the temple of Solomon—but also in our own lives as we conform to the image of Christ. Likewise, our ministries, callings, and messages ought to reflect that which is pictured in heaven.

“*Because he defiled his father’s bed*” ([1 Chron. 5:1](#)), Reuben failed to represent accurately the picture of the Son and was replaced by Judah and Joseph. Likewise, many years later, Levi failed and was replaced by Melchizedek. Israel as a whole failed as a fleshly nation and is being replaced by “*a nation producing the fruit of it*” ([Matt. 21:43](#)), that is, those bringing forth “*the fruit of the Spirit*” ([Gal. 5:22, 23](#)).

The intent of God is to reconcile all of creation, but no one gets into the Kingdom until they come in through the Door, which is Christ, the Passover Lamb. They must then grow into maturity through Pentecost in order to bring forth the fruit of the Spirit at Tabernacles. Only then is their journey complete.

Those who fail to come to spiritual maturity in this life time will do so in an age to come, for this is the only way that God can fulfill His New Covenant oath to “*establish you today as His people and that He may be your God*” ([Deut. 29:12, 13](#)).

Chapter 8: The Twenty-Four Elders

[Revelation 4:4](#) says,

⁴ And around the throne were twenty-four thrones; and upon the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments, and golden crowns on their heads.

In this scene there are 25 thrones—one for Jesus and one for each of the 24 elders. In [Dan. 7:9](#), which describes the throne and the heavenly court, we are told, “*I kept looking until thrones were set up, and the Ancient of Days took His seat.*” Daniel does not specify how many thrones were set up, but it is clear that there was more than one throne.

The ultimate fulfillment of Daniel’s prophecy is seen in [Rev. 20:11](#), which describes “*a great white throne and Him who sat upon it.*” Earlier, in [Rev. 20:4](#), we read, “*And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them.*” Who are these? John says they are the ones eligible for the first resurrection on account of their testimony (i.e., the Amen people, the overcomers).

[Dan. 7:21, 22](#) says of them,

²¹ I kept looking, and that horn was waging war with the saints and overpowering them ²² until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was passed in favor of the saints of the Highest One, and the time arrived when the saints took possession of the kingdom.

Hence, Daniel calls them “*saints of the Highest One*” (i.e., the Most High God, or El Elyon), while John describes them as being true worshipers of God, not receiving the beast’s image or mark. Both writers agree that these are the ones given authority in the kingdom when the final beast’s dominion comes to an end.

The 24 elders appear to be leaders among the overcoming “saints.” Jesus Himself spoke of twelve thrones, one for each of His disciples, in [Matt. 19:28](#),

²⁸ And Jesus said to them, “Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

This is an obvious reference to the Ancient of Days (Christ) sitting on the throne, surrounded by other thrones that form the Divine Council. But Jesus did not limit the Council to just twelve. He said only that the twelve apostles would be part of this Council. John tells us that there are actually “twenty-four elders” ([Rev. 4:4](#)) who sit on thrones. This implies twelve additional saints from the Old Testament period, which, when added to the twelve apostles add up to twenty-four.

The Seventy

To obtain a broader picture, we need to compare these numbers (12 apostles and 24 elders) with the twelve “princes” of the tribes and the “seventy” elders set up by Moses to judge the people. Each tribe had a “prince,” who was the head of the tribe. Each prince had five more elders under him, six from each tribe, for a total of 72. These are called “seventy” as a rounded off number, but it was understood to be 72.

This judicial system was organized at the suggestion of Jethro, who was Moses’ father-in-law. His advice to Moses in [Exodus 18:19–22](#) says,

¹⁹ Now listen to me: I shall give you counsel, and God be with you. You be the people’s representative before God, and you bring the disputes to God, ²⁰ then teach them the statutes and the laws, and make known to them the way in which they are to walk, and the work they are to do. ²¹ Furthermore, you shall

select out of all the people able men who fear God, men of truth, those who hate dishonest gain; and you shall place these over them, as leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens.²² **And let them judge the people at all times; and let it be that every major dispute they will bring to you, but every minor dispute they themselves will judge. So it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you.**

Hence, the numbers 12 and 72 were important in Israel's judicial system. In the time of David, the twelve were expanded to 24, implying also that the 72 was expanded to 144. In the book of Revelation these numbers are multiplied further to 144,000 and to 288,000. We will explain this further at a later time.

The Two Courts

When Israel sinned by worshiping the golden calf, it became apparent that the Israelites needed a second court outside the camp, so that those who were defiled could come for cleansing before being allowed to re-enter the camp of Israel. Hence, in the wake of the golden calf incident, [Exodus 33:7](#) says,

⁷ Now Moses used to take the tent and pitch it outside the camp, a good distance from the camp, and he called it the tent of meeting. And it came about, that everyone who sought the Lord would go out to the tent of meeting which was outside the camp.

Later, this pattern was repeated and enlarged upon when the temple was built in Jerusalem. In the time of Jesus, this court was outside the eastern gate at Bethphage, where a small community of priests resided. These priests oversaw the ashes of the red heifer and the cistern of water, by which men could be purified as they entered the city. It is also the place where Jesus was crucified, as I showed in my book, [Luke: Healing the Breaches, Book 8](#).

So in the days of Moses, there were two courts. The first was the tabernacle itself, where Moses received the word from God. The second was outside the camp, where the common people resolved their disputes and received cleansing from defilement. This was also the place where lepers were inspected to see if they had been healed.

The primary court was the tabernacle (and later, the temple). [Exodus 33:8–11](#) describes what normally occurred when Moses went to the throne of God (Ark) in the tabernacle. He would “*stand at the entrance of the tent, and the Lord would speak with Moses*” ([Exodus 33:9](#)). Was this an audible voice? Was it loud enough for all to hear? Verse 11 says,

¹¹ Thus the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend. When Moses returned to the camp, his servant, Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart from the tent.

So we see that Joshua was present with Moses at the tent when God spoke. Moses stood “at the entrance of the tent,” while Joshua was inside the tent. Even when Moses left the scene, Joshua remained in the tent. [Joshua 1:1](#) says that Joshua was “Moses’ minister” (KJV), or “Moses’ servant” (NASB). What was he doing at the tent? Since Joshua was a type of Yeshua (Jesus), it is likely that he was the one through whom the word was given to Moses and to the people. [Heb. 1:1](#), [2](#) says,

¹ God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, ² in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.

If Jesus was to speak to us “*in these last days*,” then this suggests that Joshua was an earlier type of Christ filling that role in his time. It appears, then, that the Father spoke to Joshua, and Joshua (“the Amen”) repeated it word for word, so that Moses would hear it audibly.

This court system has now been expanded greatly since the days of Moses. Yet the foundational principles remain unchanged. Yeshua-Jesus still speaks to us in these last days, repeating what He has heard from the Father ([John](#)

[14:10](#)). Those who hear His voice may prophesy, even as Moses was a prophet ([Deut. 18:18](#)), that is, a spokesman who was called to repeat the testimony of Jesus faithfully.

The primary court at the tabernacle was for “*every major dispute*” ([Exodus 18:22, NASB](#)). In essence, it formed a Supreme Court. The secondary court, which Moses established outside the camp, was for “*every minor dispute.*”

These two courts are reflected in later prophecies about the Great White Throne and the other thrones. Even as Jethro told Moses in [Exodus 18:20](#) to appoint elders and “*teach them the statutes and the laws,*” so that they could judge most disputes among the people, so also has Christ appointed apostles and elders to learn the laws of God and judge the people righteously.

White Garments and Golden Crowns

In [Rev. 4:4](#) John saw the 24 elders wearing white garments and having golden crowns on their heads. The white garments indicate “*the righteous acts of the saints*” ([Rev. 19:8](#)). White garments (fine linens) are also the dress of priests. Hence, these 24 elders are called to be “*priests of God and of Christ*” ([Rev. 20:6](#)). In Moses’ time, only priests were allowed within the tabernacle itself. The 24 elders surrounding the throne were called as priests. Since the twelve apostles formed half of these judges, it follows that the apostles—regardless of their tribal affiliations—were priests in the Order of Melchizedek.

They also are said to wear “crowns.” The Greek word is *stephanos*, “wreath, or garland” given to a victor at public games. This word is not the same as a diadem as pictured in [Rev. 19:12](#), where we read of Christ, “*and upon His head are many diadems.*”

The Apostle Paul, knowing that he was soon to be executed in Rome, said in [2 Tim. 4:7, 8](#),

⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; ⁸ in the future there is laid up for me the crown [*stephanos*] of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

Further, the importance of obeying “the rules” is emphasized by Paul in [2 Tim. 2:5](#),

⁵ And also if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules [*nomimos*, “lawfully”].

There are many who run the race and try to win the prize in an unlawful manner. But the *stephanos* is not given to those who “cheat” in a race. Such people do not like the rules, thinking that rules are too restrictive. They desire “freedom in Christ,” not realizing that their lawlessness disqualifies them from the prize. In the end, Jesus will say to them, “*depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness*” ([Matt. 7:23](#)).

Chapter 9: The Council and the Throne

The twenty-four elders that John saw surrounding the throne of God in [Rev. 4:4](#) are part of the Council of God. The Council (*sode*) is mentioned many times in the Old Testament. [Job 15:8](#) says,

⁸ Do you hear the secret council [*sode*] of God, and limit wisdom to yourself?

[Jer. 23:18, 22](#) chides the prophets in his day for following what was in their own hearts instead of going before the Council of the Lord:

¹⁸ But who has stood in the council [*sode*] of the Lord, that he should see and hear His word? Who has given heed to His word and listened? ... ²² But if they had stood in My council, then they would have announced My words to My people, and would have turned them back from their evil way and from the evil of their deeds.

In [Ezekiel 13:9](#) we find that “*prophets who see false visions and utter lying divinations*” will “*have no place in the council of My people*.” This implies that the Council members are “My people,” rather than angels, although it is certainly possible that angels may also participate in the Council. Furthermore, Jeremiah says plainly that prophets ought to be Council members, and if so, they would hear and participate in the court proceedings. As witnesses of the decrees in the divine court, they would know what to prophesy to the people on earth in order to turn their hearts from their evil ways.

In [Psalm 89:7](#) it is called “*the Council of the holy ones*” (or saints).

⁷ A God greatly feared [reverenced] in the council [*sode*] of the holy ones, and awesome above all those who are around Him.

This reverence is pictured in [Rev. 4:10, 11](#) and again in 5:8, where they worship the One on the throne. Though they are crowned, they “*cast their crowns before the throne*” to show that their authority is derived from the Sovereign One. The ultimate purpose of worship is to put on the mind of Christ. God does not need to be reminded of who He is by positive reinforcement. Rather, it is for our benefit, so that we might become one with Him.

The Earthly Council

There was an earthly Council in Jerusalem that was patterned after the heavenly Council and which was supposed to reflect its decisions. In Jesus’ time it was called the Great Sanhedrin, consisting of the President (*Nasi*) and 69 elders, along with an *Av Beit Din*, who served as Vice-President and presided when the *Nasi* was absent. Each community, or city, also had a Council, which had a minimum of ten men, but normally 23 to 71 members, depending on the size of the community.

This tradition was said to be based on the judges that Moses set up in [Exodus 18:25, 26](#). These were seventy in number. These ascended the mount with Moses on his fifth trip up the mount, where it seems that they were “in the Spirit” when they met with God. [Exodus 24:9–11](#) says,

⁹ Then Moses went up with Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, ¹⁰ and they saw the God of Israel; and under His feet there appeared to be a pavement of sapphire, as clear as the sky itself. ¹¹ Yet He did not stretch out His hand against the nobles of the sons of Israel; and they beheld God, and they ate and drank.

While all of them went up the mount, only Moses was allowed to approach the throne. The others worshiped at a distance. [Exodus 24:1, 2](#) says,

¹ Then He said to Moses, “Come up to the Lord, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and you shall worship at a distance.² Moses alone, however, shall come near to the Lord, but they shall not come near, nor shall the people come up with him.”

Obviously, the throne of God was not physically located on Mount Horeb. It appears that at some point as they ascended the mount, they crossed over into a spiritual realm and saw the throne of God. At that point they had to stop, but Moses was allowed to proceed further. The 70 elders in this case may parallel the 24 elders in [Rev. 4:4](#), though the numbers are different.

The main problem with the Council in Jesus’ day was that most of the elders, though they were scholars, did not have a proper *revelation* of the law. They had not stood in the Council of the Lord to hear the decrees being issued from the throne of God. Hence, their scholarship was based upon men’s understanding of the law, which Isaiah and Jesus called “*the precepts of men*” ([Matt. 15:9](#)). The law must be taught by revelation, for we are not to lean upon our own understanding ([Prov. 3:5](#)). Men’s scholarly understanding is the basis of tradition.

The Sapphire Throne

[Exodus 24:10](#) says, “*under His feet there appeared to be a pavement of sapphire, as clear as the sky itself*.” Clarity, of course, determines the value of such gemstones. Jewish tradition says that the two tablets of the law were cut from sapphire. Since no sapphires of this size have ever been mined anywhere or at any time in history, it is apparent that if this is so, then the stones were given by God Himself and taken from the same material as the stones “*under His feet*.”

In [Ezekiel 10:1](#), the prophet saw a throne resembling a sapphire:

¹ Then I looked, and behold, in the expanse that was over the heads of the cherubim something like a sapphire stone [*sappiyr eben*], in appearance resembling a throne, appeared above them.

It seems, then, that both the “pavement” and the throne upon it were like sapphire stone, blue as the sky, having perfect clarity. Blue reveals the (spiritual) law, for we know that the people were to include a blue cord in the tassels of their robes to remind them of the law ([Num. 15:38, 39, 40](#)). Likewise, a throne itself is a symbol of law, for when a monarch sat upon a throne (or a judge upon “the bench”), he was judging in his capacity as a judge and administrator of the law.

Sapphire was also the stone of Dan in the breastplate ([Exodus 28:18](#)). Dan was the fifth son of Jacob, and the sapphire was the fifth stone, that is, the middle of the second row of stones. Dan means “judge,” and in the departments of divine government, Dan represents the judicial system of the Kingdom.

So the throne and its foundation, or resting place, was made of blue sapphire. Ezekiel had seen this throne earlier as he wrote the first chapter of his book. However, here the NASB translators render *eben sappiyr* as “lapis lazuli,” which is also a blue stone but which lacks the clarity of sapphire. [Ezekiel 1:26](#) says,

²⁶ Now above the expanse that was over their heads there was something resembling a throne, like lapis lazuli [*eben sappiyr*, “sapphire stone”] in appearance; and on that which resembled a throne, high up, was a figure with the appearance of a man.

It appears that lapis lazuli was a substitute for sapphire, because sapphires were rare and considered in those times to be the most valuable gemstone. The difference, of course, was obvious, for lapis lazuli was dull, and light could not pass through it.

In the Garden of Eden, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil represents the law as a path to immortality, or salvation. The tree of life represents Christ. Another way of looking at it is that the two trees represent the two covenants. When Adam and Eve ate of the first tree, they disobeyed God, and so the law could only judge them for

their sin. The law, which was meant to promote life, turned out to be their sentence of death ([Rom. 7:10](#)). One cannot achieve immortality by disobedience.

My friend, Mark Shoberg, wrote to me recently, saying,

This is taken from the Legends of the Jews, Volume 3 by Louis Ginzberg, page 118 and 119:

“Moses departed from the heavens with the two tables on which the Ten Commandments were engraved and they were made of a sapphire-like stone.” That’s what the Jews had believed! Those Ten Commandments weren’t made out of some rock that Moses just found in the Sinai desert floor ... They were carved out of a blue sapphire stone. Ginzberg [averred in] the Legends of the Jews, Volume 6 page 49: “Ancient Jewish scholars state that the sapphire employed for the tables was taken from the throne of Glory ... ”

Even the ancient traditions of Babylon believed that the tree of knowledge in the garden could not impart immortality to the people. This is seen in the Epic of Gilgamesh, which retained some knowledge seen in the Genesis story. According to the Epic, this tree had sapphire fruit on it. Mark Shoberg wrote:

“The tree that Gilgamesh witnessed in the Jeweled Garden was not a tree of lapis-lazuli, but a tree of sapphires, for the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was God’s covenant of the Law of Sin and Death that defined sin. The Epic of Gilgamesh was a story about a man in search of immortality who went so far as to invade the heavens, but his quest resulted in failure. It was the story of Adam attempting to ascend into heaven to become like God and usurp His sapphire throne where God ruled and administered the Law, but like Gilgamesh, Adam’s quest resulted in failure.

“Gilgamesh traveled through twelve leagues of darkness before he got to the Jeweled Garden, and when he finally got there, he immediately spied fruit that was costly to gaze upon. It was costly because it was the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil that demanded one’s life in exchange for its fruit. It was the tree that defined sin, crowned in none other than God’s authority and throne that judged sin.

“Even the Babylonians understood there was no life in that tree, for the Ninth Tablet of the epic ends with Gilgamesh being told by the god Shamash, “No mortal man has gone this way before, nor will, as long as the winds drive over the sea. You will never find the eternal life for which you are searching.” The sun-god, Shamash, told Gilgamesh the truth: he would never find immortal life in the beautiful sapphire tree, the fruit of which was the knowledge of good and evil that produced death.”

Perhaps we might picture the tree of the knowledge of good and evil as bearing ten sapphire-like fruits, one for each of the Ten Commandments, each one derived from the throne of God. These fruits came from a tree in the Garden, which, along with all the other trees, was pronounced “very good” in [Gen. 1:31](#). It was the misuse of that tree which brought sin into the world.

The difference between lapis lazuli and sapphire is primarily their clarity. Hence, one might think of lapis lazuli as the written law that is not clearly understood by carnal minds, while sapphires represent the full understanding by those having the mind of God. Therefore, we may think of lapis lazuli as men’s traditional understanding of the law, while a sapphire represents the revelation of the law.

Like John—or even like the seventy elders in the days of Moses—if we are caught up in the Spirit to the throne, we have the potential of joining the Council. Such a state gives us a better position by which we may understand the mind of Christ, not only hearing His decrees, but also understanding them through revelation and group discussion. When the Council comes to full clarity of revelation, then they are able to bear witness to the decrees of Christ and thus establish things in the earth. By the power of the Amen, the New Heavens and the New Earth are created by the same pattern as was found at the beginning.

Chapter 10: Thunder and Lightning

[Revelation 4:5](#) says,

⁵ And from the throne proceeds flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder. And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God;

What John saw was similar to what the Israelites saw when God descended upon Mount Sinai many years earlier. Thunder and lightning were seen as God spoke to the nation and gave them the law. [Exodus 19:16, 18](#) says,

¹⁶ So it came about on the third day, when it was morning, that there were thunder and lightning flashes and a thick cloud upon the mountain and a very loud trumpet sound, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled ... ¹⁸ Now Mount Sinai was all in smoke because the Lord descended upon it in fire ... and the whole mountain quaked violently.

All of this awesome display of power was unsettling to the Israelites, and they withdrew in fear. [Exodus 20:18–21](#) says,

¹⁸ And all the people perceived the thunder and the lightning flashes and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood at a distance. ¹⁹ Then they said to Moses, “Speak to us yourself and we will listen; but let not God speak to us, lest we die.” ²⁰ And Moses said to the people, “Do not be afraid; for God has come in order to test you, and in order that the fear of Him may remain with you, so that you may not sin.” ²¹ So the people stood at a distance, while Moses approached the thick cloud where God was.

So the people refused to draw near or to hear God directly, preferring that Moses should be the one to hear, and then to tell them what God said in a second-hand manner. This decision of the people still holds true today, as most believers today still think of God as one to be feared, rather than to be loved. Love draws; fear repels.

Fear is also the source of denominationalism, for organizational structure is usually based on the people’s desire to hear God second-hand from the leaders. They trust the leaders to convey the word of God to them accurately, and are afraid to hear God for themselves. Unfortunately, many church denominations have actively taught the people to be afraid of hearing God for themselves, lest they hear something that goes against the church creeds. They reinforce this fear by persecuting or excommunicating those who may hear differently.

Fear and Love

Moses was not afraid to hear the voice of God, though he confessed in [Deut. 9:19](#), “*I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure with which the Lord was wrathful against you in order to destroy you.*” [Heb. 12:21](#) comments on this, saying,

²¹ And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, “I am full of fear and trembling.”

The difference, however, was that Moses was afraid of what might happen to the people, but He was not afraid of God Himself. Moses was willing to go up into the fire on the mount, and so he urged the people to draw near and to hear the voice of God as well.

Likewise, John shows no sign of being afraid of the lightning and thunder surrounding the throne of God. John and Moses understood that God is love. [1 John 4:16](#) says,

¹⁶ And we have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

In other words, he who knows the love of God “*abides in God, and God abides in him.*” This unity and oneness with God is only possible when one is not afraid of God. Their “fear” is reverence, admiration, and respect, as opposed to being fearful and afraid. This lack of fear gives them *confidence* when they approach the throne of grace, for [1 John 4:17](#) says,

¹⁷ By this, love is perfected with us, that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world.

The Israelites’ fear of hearing God revealed their fear of hearing what He had to say. He came to give His law, which is the revelation of who He is, His character, His nature. The Commandments were also His promises of what our nature will be when we are one with Him. However, the people’s fear made them resistant to the will of God, putting them at enmity with His nature. So their carnal nature (“old man”) feared the law and resisted it as if it were the enemy. And indeed, the law is the enemy of the old man of flesh, for he disagrees with the law continually.

In any disagreement, the lesser fears the greater, because the lesser knows that it cannot win, nor can the will of the lesser prevail over the more powerful will. This is the underlying motive of men’s fear of the divine law. Those who fear the law are yet carnal, for their fear is motivated by the old fleshly man that ought to be crucified with Christ ([Rom. 7:22–25](#)).

Thunder

In [John 12:20–22](#) certain Greeks came to Philip, asking to speak with Jesus. Jesus then spoke to these Greeks about the hour that had come for Him to be glorified. [John 12:28, 29](#) says,

²⁸ “Father, glorify Thy name.” There came therefore a voice out of heaven: “I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.” ²⁹ The multitude therefore, who stood by and heard it, were saying that it had thundered; others were saying, “An angel has spoken to Him.”

We see here how *thunder signifies the voice of God*. In that particular occasion, the glorification of the Father’s name would begin with the cross and culminate in the salvation of all men, for Jesus explained in verse 32,

³² And I, if I be lifted up from the earth [on the cross], will draw all men to Myself.

This is the voice of love, which draws all men to Him. What a contrast between this scene and that which took place at Mount Sinai! Yet this is the difference between the two mountains and the two covenants. [Heb. 12:22](#) says of the believers in Christ, “*But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.*” This is not Mount Zion in Jerusalem, but Mount Hermon ([Deut. 4:48](#)), where Jesus was transfigured.

[Hebrews 12:26](#) continues,

²⁶ And His voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying, “Yet once more I will shake not only the earth, but also the heaven.”

The divine purpose in shaking heaven and earth is to cast down all that is not of His Kingdom, so that all that remains is that which cannot be shaken, “*for our God is a consuming fire*” ([Heb. 12:29](#)). The fact that God is a consuming fire does not change from the first mount to the last. Instead, the true nature of this God of love is better understood through the New Covenant.

The Ten Commandments bring fear to the old man, for it knows that it is incapable of perfect obedience and fears the consequences. But when read as the Ten Promises of God, where God holds Himself responsible to change the hearts of men, we respond to His love and are thus changed into His image by beholding Him ([2 Cor. 3:18](#)).

The fire is not meant to destroy men, but to destroy their evil works that do not align with His own nature. In other words, God brings judgment in order to bring all men to perfection, as expressed in the standard of God's law. Once we understand this "thunder," we lose all fear of drawing near to this "fire." Like Moses—and John, too—we can come up higher ([Exodus 20:21](#); [Rev. 4:1](#)), drawing near to God's throne without fear, in spite of the thunder and the lightning.

Lightning

If thunder signifies the voice of God, lightning signifies the Sons of God. Lightning is a bolt of fire emanating from the throne of God. It is a piece of God's character expressed in a flash of fire. Lightning is the source of thunder, and hence, the voice of God is heard in the Sons of God.

The Hebrew word for lightning is *barak*. It is pictured in [Psalm 77:17](#), [18](#) as God's arrows being shot from a great bow:

¹⁷ The clouds poured out water; the skies gave forth a sound; Thy arrows flashed here and there. ¹⁸ The sound of Thy thunder was in the whirlwind; the lightnings lit up the world; the earth trembled and shook.

Arrows are also pictured in Psalm 127 as "children." [Psalm 127:3–5](#) says,

³ Behold, children are a gift of the Lord; the fruit of the womb is a reward. ⁴ Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one's youth. ⁵ How blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them ...

If arrows are like children, then God's arrows ("lightning") represent the Sons of God, who speak with the voice of God ("thunder").

The fact that thunder and lightning were seen coming from the throne, both by the Israelites in Moses' day as well as by John, reveals something about the purpose of God in shaking the earth. The nature of God, revealed in His law, prophesy of the Sons of God, whose voice will shake the earth by the power of God.

Their voice is not merely a shout, but a message of Sonship. Their example is for the rest of the earth to follow. And when their voice has sufficiently shaken the earth at the end of the present age, all that will remain standing is that which conforms to the standard of the perfect will of God in His Kingdom.

This is the goal of the cross. Was Jesus lifted up on the cross? Yes, for we know this from the biblical record. Will He then draw all men to Himself? Yes, for that is the promise of Christ through the New Covenant that has been revealed progressively since the beginning of time.

Chapter 11: The Sea of Glass

[Rev. 4:5](#) tells us that there were “*seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.*” It is not the lampstands, but the “*fire burning before the throne*” that represent the seven Spirits of God. We had already learned from [Rev. 1:20](#) that the seven lampstands were the seven churches, and verse 16 says that in His hand Christ was holding the seven stars, which were the *angels* of the seven churches.

- 7 lampstands are the 7 churches
- 7 fires on the lamps are the 7 Spirits of God
- 7 stars in His hand are the 7 angels

Christ Himself was situated “*in the middle of the lampstands*” ([Rev. 1:13](#)).

The Pattern

[Revelation 4:6](#) says,

⁶ and before the throne there was, as it were, a sea of glass like crystal ...

The laver in the tabernacle of Moses was built according to the pattern of this “*sea of glass*” that was before the throne. In God’s instructions to Moses about the way to construct the furniture for the tabernacle, God says in [Exodus 25:40](#),

⁴⁰ And see that you make them after the pattern [tabniyth] for them, which was shown to you on the mountain.

Moses saw the heavenly tabernacle and was told to duplicate it on earth according to that pattern, model, or blueprint. As for the laver itself, instructions were given to Moses in [Exodus 30:18–21](#). It was to be built of bronze and placed “*between the tent of meeting and the altar.*” Its purpose was for the priests to “*wash their hands and their feet, that they may not die.*”

The heavenly temple thus had a sea of glass in front of it, presumably to cleanse those priests of God who would draw near to God’s throne in heaven. Did John need to wash his hands and feet when He was taken up to the throne of God? Nothing is said in Revelation 4, but the fact that it was like “glass,” having no ripples, suggests that it was unused or unneeded.

Cleansed by the Word

John was already cleansed by the word. In [John 15:3](#) Jesus had told the disciples, including John,

³ “You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.”

Furthermore, Jesus had already washed the feet of the disciples in [John 13:3–10](#), thus preparing them for an audience before the throne. Hence, the sea was like glass. Washing their feet was an outward sign or ceremony, but it was actually the word itself that had cleansed their hearts, qualifying them for immortality, “*that they may not die.*”

We read again of the “*sea of glass*” in [Rev. 15:2, 3](#),

² And I saw, as it were, a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who had come off victorious from the beast and from his image and from the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, holding harps of God. ³ And they sang the Song of Moses ...

In this case the “sea” is no longer described as being “like crystal,” but as “*a sea of glass mixed with fire*.” Whereas John had seen the sea in front of the throne, here we see the overcomers “*standing upon the sea of glass*.” What does this mean? Certainly, in the tabernacle of Moses no priest ever stood in or upon the water of the laver.

First, this “sea” contained “fire.” As such it is connected to the “*lake of fire*” ([Rev. 20:14, 15](#)), which is the “fire” of God’s nature that purifies the hearts of men in order to qualify them for immortality. The lake of fire and the sea of glass serve the same purpose, except that one is for unbelievers, while the other is for believers (priests). The believers walk on the sea of glass, because they are no longer in need of divine purification. The unbelievers, however, must be cast into the lake of fire, because they need such purification.

This lake of fire also contains “brimstone,” that is, sulfur, which is a powerful cleansing agent as well as a substance that burns with intense heat. The Greek word for sulfur is *theon*, whose root word is *theos*, or “God, divinity.” It was a divine purifying agent. Thayer’s Greek Lexicon tells us, “brimstone was regarded as having power to purify.”

The Molten Sea

When Solomon built the temple, he made the laver larger than the one built under Moses. He built it according to the pattern (*tabniyth*) that was shown to his father, David ([1 Chron. 28:11, 12](#)). The Hebrew word is the same as the word used in [Exodus 25:40](#), although the NASB chose to translate it “plan” in David’s instructions to Solomon.

In both cases the pattern, or plan, was given by divine revelation—first to Moses, and later to David. Both saw the heavenly pattern, but David saw something greater than what Moses saw. For this reason, he instructed Solomon to build a temple, rather than a tabernacle. This tells us that the heavenly patterns are not static, but progressive, as if to reveal the expected changes in the development of the Kingdom through time.

As for the laver, Solomon was instructed to build a “molten sea” (KJV) [1 Kings 7:23 \(NASB\)](#) interprets this to mean,

²³ Now he made the sea of cast metal ten cubits from brim to brim, circular in form, and its height was five cubits, and thirty cubits in circumference.

The laver was “*thirty cubits in circumference*,” which means it was roughly ten cubits in diameter. (30 divided by π = 9.55 cubits.) Solomon placed this laver upon twelve oxen, three of which faced each direction. These oxen represent the twelve apostles. In general, an ox in Scripture represents a strong and obedient servant, and it is contrasted with the donkey, which is weaker and often stubborn. Hence also, donkeys represent those in Pentecost, while the oxen represent the overcomers in the feast of Tabernacles.

For this reason, the twelve oxen supporting the laver do not truly represent the twelve tribes of Israel, although certainly, the twelve tribes were called to become overcomers. However, they failed to reach that goal, and only the remnant of grace—that is, the overcomers—received the promise ([Rom. 11:7](#)).

It is interesting, then, that under Solomon the twelve oxen were positioned *under* the laver, while in [Rev. 15:2](#) the overcomers were seen *standing upon* the sea of glass. They move from supporting the cleansing word to standing upon the word. Perhaps this indicates a shift in their calling from Pentecost to Tabernacles.

Removing the Oxen

More than two centuries after the temple of Solomon had been constructed, another shift took place in regard to the twelve oxen under the molten sea. King Ahaz of Judah (the father of Hezekiah) “sent messengers to Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, saying, ‘*I am your servant and your son*’” ([2 Kings 16:7](#)). Ahaz bribed the king of Assyria to free Judah from paying tribute to the king of Syria.

The plan worked ([2 Kings 16:9](#)), but when Ahaz went to Damascus to meet with the Assyrian king, he became too impressed with the pagan altar that he saw in Damascus. [2 Chron. 28:23](#) says,

²³ For he sacrificed to the gods of Damascus which had defeated him, and said, “Because the gods of the kings of Aram helped them, I will sacrifice to them that they may help me.” But they became the downfall of him and all Israel.

He then commanded Urijah the priest to build an altar patterned after the one in Damascus ([2 Kings 16:10, 11](#)). The original Bronze altar built under Solomon by the heavenly pattern was removed and placed on the north side of the new altar ([2 Kings 16:14](#)).

Likewise, [2 Kings 16:17](#) says,

¹⁷ Then King Ahaz cut off the borders of the stands, and removed the laver from them; he also took down the sea from the bronze oxen which were under it, and put it on a pavement of stone.

[2 Chron. 28:24](#) says further that “*he cut the utensils of the house of God in pieces; and he closed the doors of the house of the Lord.*”

So in the time of apostasy, the twelve oxen were removed from their supporting role for God’s word (“water”). The same has been true during the Age of Pentecost, especially during the time when the Scriptures were hidden from the people for many centuries. The light of the word did not spread to the common people again until the invention of the printing press in the mid-1400’s. That event, as we will see, was prophesied in [Rev. 10:2](#) in the vision of the “*little book which was open.*”

The Songs Overcomers Sing

It appears, then, in the progression of the Kingdom, that the overcomers (oxen) ought to support the word of God. Yet at the same time they are to stand upon the word as they teach it to the people. Their message, as depicted in [Rev. 15:3, 4](#) is to sing the Song of Moses and the Song of the Lamb. The words are given to us:

³ ... Great and marvelous are Thy works, O Lord God, the Almighty; righteous and true are Thy ways, Thou King of the nations. ⁴ Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? For Thou alone art holy; for all the nations will come and worship before Thee, for Thy righteous acts have been revealed.

Many today are willing to sing the Song of the Lamb, but shun the Song of Moses. The overcomers, however, understand that all Scripture is inspired revelation and that we are not to live on bread alone, but by every word that comes from God. When the word is truly taught, “*all the nations will come and worship before Thee.*” And why not? The Good News is that God has reconciled “*the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them*” ([2 Cor. 5:19](#)).

Seeing that we have such a great and good God, One who not only has made promises, but also has the power to keep His word, who wouldn’t worship Him? The central theme of the songs sung by the overcomers is the Restoration of All Things, when “*all the nations will come and worship*” Him.

The sea of glass was not just a pleasant part of the heavenly landscape. It portrayed everything that was revealed in the lavers built by Moses and by Solomon. Its most important function was to purify priests who were approaching God to minister to Him. In the end, all the nations will come to worship God, but they must all first be purified at the laver, the molten sea, or the lake of fire.

Chapter 12: The Four Living Creatures

[Revelation 4:6–8](#) says,

⁶ ... and in the center and around the throne, four living creatures full of eyes in front and behind. ⁷ And the first creature was like a lion, and the second creature like a calf, and the third creature had a face like that of a man, and the fourth creature was like a flying eagle. ⁸ And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within ...

These four living creatures represent all living creatures on the earth. Each is the “king” from its own division. The lion is the king of wild beasts (predators). The second is the “calf” (*moschos*). This Greek word is what the Septuagint translation uses to mean “a bull.” The bull is the “king” of the cattle. The third is the man, who is the overall “king” of the earth. The fourth is the flying eagle, which is the “king” of birds.

These living creatures are seen worshiping God, and so, “*when every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea*” ([Rev. 5:13](#)) give glory to God, the four living creatures say “Amen” ([Rev. 5:14](#)). This great scene foresees all of creation in agreement with God, a time when all things are reconciled to Him ([Col. 1:20](#)).

The Four Divisions of Israel’s Tribes

When Israel was organized into a kingdom at Mount Sinai, each tribe was camped in its own place around the throne of God—that is, the Ark of the Covenant in the tabernacle. Each had its own “standard,” or banner/flag, and on each flag was pictured a different “living creature.” So [Num. 2:2](#) says,

² The sons of Israel shall camp, each by his own standard, with the banners of their fathers’ households; they shall camp around the tent of meeting at a distance.

On each of the four sides were three tribes of Israel, and in the midst of each side was the leader among those three tribes. The placement of each tribe is given in Numbers 2. To the east was Judah, with its banner of a lion. Next to him on either side was Issachar and Zebulon ([Num. 2:3–9](#)). The twelve tribes were situated this way:

EAST:

Issachar

Judah (Lion)

Zebulon

SOUTH:

Simeon

Reuben (Man)

Gad

WEST:

Manasseh

Ephraim (Bull)

Benjamin

NORTH:

Asher

Dan (Eagle)

Naphtali

The flags of the first three tribes were determined by Jacob's blessing in Genesis 49. Jacob called Judah "*a lion's whelp*" ([Genesis 49:9](#)). Reuben means "*Behold, a son,*" and Jacob calls him "my firstborn" ([Gen. 49:3](#)). Jacob referred to Dan as "*a serpent in the way*" ([Gen. 49:17](#)), and his banner was of a flying eagle carrying away a serpent, as eagles are known to do.

The flag of the last tribe (Ephraim) was taken from Moses' blessing in [Deut. 33:17](#), where Moses calls Ephraim "*the first-born of his ox,*" (i.e., the ox of Joseph, whose two horns were Ephraim and Manasseh).

The tribes of Israel (and their placement around the throne) were meant to represent all living creatures. The four tribes were the leading tribes in Israel, but they were also the leaders of creation itself.

Ezekiel's Vision of the Four Living Creatures

Ezekiel's book opens with the prophet's vision of the throne of God, around which were depictions of the four living creatures seen on the flags of Israel's four leading tribes. [Ezekiel 1:10](#) says,

¹⁰ As for the form of their faces, each had the face of a man, all four had the face of a lion on the right and the face of a bull on the left, and all four had the face of an eagle.

The prophet's description shows that there were four identical depictions on all four sides of a central object that looked like "*glowing metal in the midst of the fire*" ([Ezekiel 1:4](#)). Many in recent years have claimed that the prophet was seeing a space ship. That topic, of course, is outside the scope of this study. What is clear is that the prophet was seeing something similar to what John saw on Patmos, with only a few differences.

John saw the four living creatures as separate and distinct beings, whereas Ezekiel saw four living creatures each having all four faces on its four sides. Either way, the meaning is the same, for they represent all of creation.

Each of the four faces in Ezekiel's vision were positioned to match the placement of the tribes of Israel around the tabernacle ([Ezekiel 1:10](#)). The prophet saw his vision as he looked to the north ([Ezekiel 1:4](#)). Hence, this strange object was *moving south* toward the prophet, and so the first face he saw was that of man. Reuben's flag flew south of the tabernacle.

The prophet then saw the lion on the right. The right side would be the east side when looking north. On the east side was Judah's flag picturing the lion.

The prophet then saw the ox on the left. The left side would be the west side when looking north. On the west was the flag of Ephraim picturing the ox. (Later, in [Ezekiel 10:14](#), the ox is called a "cherub.")

Finally, the northernmost face came into view, and Ezekiel saw that it depicted an eagle. The tribe of Dan was situated on the north side of the tabernacle, flying his flag which pictured the flying eagle carrying away the serpent.

It is clear, then, that whatever Ezekiel saw was also revealed years later to John. Ezekiel saw these living creatures having "four wings" ([Ezekiel 1:6](#)), whereas John saw them with "six wings" ([Rev. 4:8](#)). Some may believe that John saw a space craft with updated technology, but we are concerned with its spiritual meaning and how it presents the divine plan for creation.

Four is the number of the earth, or the material creation, and six is the number of man. (See my book, [The Biblical Meaning of Numbers from One to Forty](#).) Therefore, we can say that God was revealing to Ezekiel a pattern of creation, while John saw the six-winged creatures in terms of man's leadership—specifically, man as a fully reconciled creature. The revelation shifts from general to specific, from creation to man.

Wings themselves are dependent upon the wind for their usefulness. The Hebrew word for wind is *ruach*, which means "spirit, breath, wind, air in motion." The word can be used to describe natural wind or one's spirit. [Ezekiel 1:12](#)

describes these four creatures, saying, “*wherever the spirit was about to go, they would go, without turning as they went.*” This must be an important detail, because it is repeated in [Ezekiel 1:17](#) and again in [Ezekiel 10:11](#).

Spiritually speaking, this shows that the four living creatures do not deviate from the movement of the Spirit. Being in perfect harmony and agreement, they go wherever the Spirit sends them. In such a perfected state, each creature has all four callings, so that if he is led to perform the function of Judah, he goes in that direction without having to turn. If he is led to perform something within the calling of Ephraim, he goes in that direction without having to turn.

John tells us in [Rev. 4:6](#) that the four living creatures were “*in the center and around the throne.*” Were they in two places at the same time? Were there two sets of living creatures? We are given no clue, but if we were to picture the scene in physical terms, we would have to depict living creatures decorating the throne itself and another more active set of four around the throne.

At any rate, throughout the rest of this section of John’s revelation, he treats the four living creatures as if there is just one group that actively worships God.

The Eyes of God

[Rev. 4:8](#) also says that the four living creatures “*are full of eyes around and within.*” What are these eyes?

[Ezekiel 1:18](#) says, “*and the rims of all four of them were full of eyes round about.*” [Ezekiel 10:12](#) says that “*the wheels were full of eyes.*” Some say that these “eyes” are actually windows on a space ship. Zechariah saw one stone on which were seven eyes ([Zech. 3:9](#)). Later, he says that “*these seven*” are “*the eyes of the Lord, which range to and fro throughout the earth*” ([Zech. 4:10](#)).

The eyes thus show us that nothing is hidden from Him. All that happens on earth is fully known and understood by the God of heaven.

The Cause for True Worship

The four living creatures in [Rev. 4:8](#) have a purpose:

⁸ And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say, “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come.”

The text of their worship is taken from [Isaiah 6:3](#),

³ And one called out to another and said, “Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory.

Such worship is the model for all creation to follow. But worship is not mere lip service. There are many who mouth these words, but who do not live what they say. In fact, it has been said that Christians lie most when they sing. That is, perhaps, a bit harsh. It is probably more accurate to say that Christians often worship without understanding, and so their words do not match their real life in the world.

The world tells us that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. In other words, we tend to imitate those that we admire. A more biblical way of expressing this is to say that imitation is the sincerest form of worship. God is less interested in our words than in our way of life. The right words are good, of course, but they are meaningless and even hypocritical apart from a godly way of life.

The four living creatures who continuously acknowledge the holiness of God represent all creation in agreement with God in every aspect of life. They recognize His holiness not only with their mouths, but also with their hearts. They

represent creation with the law of God written on its heart. The New Covenant promises of God are thus fulfilled. Somehow God found a way to turn the hearts of all men, so that they would become His people, and He would be their God ([Deut. 29:12–15](#)).

The Twenty-Four Elders

[Revelation 4:9](#), [10](#) continues,

⁹ And when the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, to Him who lives forever and ever, ¹⁰ the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne saying,

Here we see additional information about their worship. Not only do they acknowledge the holiness of God, but they also “*give glory and honor and thanks to Him.*” Such worship comes from a grateful heart that is in awe of His works, His power, His love, and His wisdom. Who would not worship Him? “*Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Thy name?*” ([Rev. 15:4](#)). When God’s righteous acts are revealed, all nations will indeed come and worship Him, not because they have been condemned by the Old Covenant, but because God has fulfilled His promise to mankind through the New Covenant.

Upon seeing the worship of the four beasts (i.e., all creation), the twenty-four elders “*fall down before Him*” and “*worship Him.*” This scene is not meant to picture twenty-four elders falling down, then getting back up, only to fall down again continuously every time the living creatures sing *Holy, Holy, Holy*. We are to understand that this is the purpose of creation and the goal of history. We are to understand that God has the power to make it happen, and that the will of man cannot withstand or prevent God from fulfilling His promises.

So the twenty-four elders acknowledge that He is the King of Kings. This is why they “*cast their crowns before the throne.*” It is a metaphor for recognizing that their own authority was given by God and is therefore subject to the sovereignty of God.

The Creator’s Rights

The summarized text of their worship is given in [Rev. 4:11](#),

¹¹ Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they existed, and were created.”

Here the twenty-four elders acknowledge the law by which God has the right to subject all things to Himself. It is by right of creation, for the Creator owns that which He creates. By this same law we own the labor that we put into any project, unless we are slaves. When a man builds furniture, he uses wood that was created by God. God owns the wood, but man has a claim on the furniture on account of his labor that has shaped the wood to make it more useful.

God’s six-day time of labor in the first chapter of Genesis gives God the rights that come with ownership. Men have mere authority in the earth that is subject to the sovereignty of God. Man’s authority is real, but it is not final. Man’s decisions to disobey God are done according to his authority, but in the end, the law gives God the right to overrule the will of man.

Man was made of the dust of the ground ([Gen. 2:7](#)). Man was made of material that God created—dust. God lays claim to the land, saying “*the land is Mine*” ([Lev. 25:23](#)). He also told the prophet in [Jeremiah 27:5](#), [6](#),

⁵ I have made the earth, the men and the beasts which are on the face of the earth by My great power and by My outstretched arm, and I will give it to the one who is pleasing in My sight. ⁶ And now I have given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, My servant, and I have given him also the wild animals of the field to serve him.

If God has the right to give His land to Nebuchadnezzar, He also has the right to take it away from him and to give it to another. The pride of man thinks that he is absolute owner of the land that he rules, but even King Nebuchadnezzar learned the hard way that this was not so. In [Dan. 4:34, 35](#) we read his humble testimony about how he learned that his authority was secondary to the sovereignty of God.

Because man was created, he does not have the lawful right to sell himself or his “land” (dust of the earth) into slavery to sin forever. His rights are only temporary, lasting only until the Jubilee. The law of Jubilee asserts God’s right to take it back and to do with it according to His will. By this law, then, having not given away His sovereign rights as the Creator, God is able to give the dominion to Jesus Christ and to restore all creation, putting all things under His feet.

This is what is being celebrated by the four living creatures and by the twenty-four elders. They recognize that the love of God would not allow His creation to remain enslaved to sin beyond a certain point in time. They recognize His wisdom in not giving man sovereignty over his own destiny, but limiting him to various levels of authority. Because this awesome plan is so little known among the people on earth, few are able to worship Him with full understanding and appreciation. But the twenty-four elders understand, agree, and worship Him in awe.

This, then, is the revelation of the fourth chapter of Revelation which correlates with the fourth letter of the Hebrew alphabet—the *daleth*, the open door. This is the revelation of those who are called to go higher into the realms of God. The voice of God said in [Rev. 4:1](#), “*Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things.*” By the end of this chapter, and again in the next, we see the revelation of the restoration of all things, where “*the whole earth is full of His glory.*” This is “*what must take place*” before the divine plan is completed and earth history, as we know it, ends.

Chapter 13: Who is Worthy to Open the Book?

The fifth chapter of Revelation correlates with the fifth letter of the Hebrew alphabet, the *hey*, which is the breath of God. It also serves as their number five, which is the number of grace or favor. As I wrote in my book, [The Biblical Meaning of Numbers from One to Forty](#), p. 6,

“Hey at the beginning of a Hebrew word means ‘the’ or ‘behold.’ In the middle of a word it signifies inspiration or revelation. At the end of the word it signifies ‘what comes from’.”

The letter is pronounced by breathing out (expiration), because God is the one who breathes the breath of life into us. He exhales so that we may inhale. His expiration gives us inspiration. Paul writes in [2 Tim. 3:16](#),

¹⁶ All Scripture is inspired by God [*theopneustos*, “God-breathed”] and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.

The Greek word for the phrase “inspired by God” comes from a compound word made up of *theo*, “God,” and *pneustos*, “breath, wind.”

Hence, the fifth chapter of Revelation gives us the key inspiration of all Scripture—that which God has breathed to inspire us with the mind of Christ from the beginning. This chapter reveals the core nature and scope of divine grace, which reaches its culmination in the restoration of all creation.

The Case of the Sealed Book

[Rev. 5:1–3](#) begins with a heavenly court case to determine if anyone was worthy to open the sealed book.

¹ And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a book written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals. ² And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?” ³ And no one in heaven, or on the earth, or under the earth, was able to open the book, or to look into it.

It is plain that this book contained the divine plan for heaven and earth, showing the path by which the creation was to be restored so that God could be “*all in all*” ([1 Cor. 15:28](#)). Yet the book was sealed so that no one could read it and discover its prophetic secrets. Opening this book was important, because this was to be the revelation given to John himself. It is for this reason that the book had seven seals and that these seals began to be broken in [Rev. 6:1](#).

The Council of the Lord met to discuss and to determine who was worthy to break the seals and to reveal the divine plan. John was invited to this Council meeting as an earthly witness to a heavenly event.

No One Qualified

We can understand why no one “*on the earth or under the earth was able to open the book*,” for mankind was in no condition to know the mind of Christ, nor was any man qualified. But why was “*no one in heaven*” qualified to open the book? No angel was qualified, and the One seated on the throne made no effort to reveal the book’s contents.

At first, it was established that no one was worthy to open the book. For this reason, John found himself weeping uncontrollably as he observed the heavenly dilemma. [Rev. 5:4](#) says,

⁴ And I began to weep greatly, because no one was found worthy to open the book, or to look into it;

John was greatly distressed. So why would this scene include a period of time in which no one was found worthy to open the book? Was not Jesus Christ worthy from the beginning of time? Yet no one in heaven was found worthy for

a season. The answer, I believe, is found in the fact that Jesus had to come to earth, die on the cross, rise from the dead, and ascend to the throne before He was found worthy, legally speaking, to open the book. He was always worthy insofar as His righteous character was concerned. However, to qualify to open the book required something more of Him.

Jesus Christ was uniquely qualified because, as the Son of God, He represented the beginning of the merger between heaven and earth. This is what was unique about Him, and only a Son of God was qualified to know (and to reveal to others) the divine plan in its fulness. So we read in [Rev. 5:5](#),

⁵ and one of the elders said to me, “Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals.”

He was qualified because He had “overcome.” Overcome what? Well, everything, the world. Jesus told His disciples in [John 16:33](#),

³³ These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.

During His life, He overcame by living a perfect life. He overcame temptation at the start of His ministry. He overcame the urge to avoid His calling as the Lion of the tribe of Judah—which was to die. (His calling as the dead lion is pictured in [Gen. 49:9](#) and again in [Judges 14:5, 6](#), where the dead lion is the solution to Samson’s riddle.) In other words, Jesus was obedient even unto death, overcoming all things, and this qualified Him to be raised from the dead and to ascend to the throne.

He is both a lion and a lamb at the same time. He is a lion in that He overcame all things. He is a lamb in His peace-loving nature, by which He rules His beloved creation with a heart of love.

The Lamb

After John was comforted by the words of the elder, the apostle took note of a strange-looking “Lamb” standing between the throne and the 24 elders. We read in [Rev. 5:6](#),

⁶ And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders a Lamb [*arnion*] standing, as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth.

This Lamb was not dead, but “*standing as if slain*.” How does one stand “*as if slain*”? The idea is to convey the idea that Christ had risen from the dead, having all the marks proving that He had been killed at one time. This Lamb had not just two horns, but seven, to indicate divine perfection of power, for a horn is a symbol of power and strength.

Likewise, He had “*seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God*.” The eyes of God are the eyes of omniscience, knowing all that happens in heaven and in earth. By my own experience, I have learned that there is an angel named “The Eyes of God,” who empowers all seers and watchmen, giving them what knowledge and revelation is needed to carry out their callings.

We all know that the Lamb of God is Jesus Christ, for John the Baptist identified Him plainly in [John 1:29](#) and [36](#). However, the book of Revelation is not only the “unveiling of Jesus Christ,” it also reveals the historical steps leading to the manifestation of the sons of God as God’s Kingdom merges with and emerges in the earth. This is in accord with the Lord’s Prayer that His will be done in earth as it is in heaven.

Thus, at times the Lamb can be pictured as Jesus by Himself; but at other times as a collective body of Christ with Jesus Himself serving as the Head of that body. Psalm 23 is about the Lord being our Shepherd. [Psalm 100:3](#) says,

“We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.” Jesus is not only the Great Shepherd, but also is the Lamb. Likewise, there are earthly shepherds who should also be lambs.

The New Testament uses two different Greek words that are both translated “lamb.” One is *amnos*, which is used of literal sacrificial lambs and figuratively applies to Jesus in that role. The second is *arnion*, which is a “little lamb” and applies figuratively to God’s people.

The *Amnos* is Jesus

First, let us look at the word *amnos*. In [John 1:29](#), we read,

²⁹ The next day he saw Jesus coming to him, and said, “Behold the Lamb [*amnos*] of God who takes away the sin of the world!”

This is repeated in verse 36, where again John uses the word *amnos* to describe Jesus. The word is again used in the story of the Ethiopian eunuch in [Acts 8:32](#),

³² Now the passage of Scripture which he was reading was this: “He was led as a sheep to slaughter; and as a lamb [Greek: *amnos*] before its shearers is silent, so He does not open His mouth.”

This is a quotation from [Isaiah 53:7](#). The word is again used to describe Jesus Christ in [1 Peter 1:19](#),

¹⁹ but with precious blood, as of a lamb [*amnos*] unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.

All of these examples apply to Jesus Christ Himself. No one else died for our sins, and so no one else is the *Amnos* of God. Jesus holds that position exclusively, and for this reason He is the only one through whom salvation can come.

The *Arnion*

The word *arnion* is also translated “lamb.” This word is a diminutive form of *amnos*. The Concordant Version translates it “lambkin,” an outdated English word meaning a little lamb. The only New Testament use of this term outside of the book of Revelation is found in [John 21:15](#),

¹⁵ So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?” He said to Him, “Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.” He said to him, “Tend my lambs” [*arnion*].

When Jesus told Peter, “tend my lambs,” it is obvious that Jesus did not expect Peter to feed or take care of Jesus Himself, but rather His body, the little lambs. The word is used to mean the body of Christ—certainly not separate from Christ, but included with Him even as the Head and Body are one. It is the New Creation Man.

The book of Revelation uses only *arnion*, never *amnos*. It is the story of the little lambs that Peter was supposed to tend, or feed. The book of Revelation reveals how the lambs grow into spiritual maturity not only by the spiritual food that they eat, but also through suffering in tribulation as their faith and patience is exercised. It is the prophetic story of the overcomers becoming lambs like the Lamb before them.

These lambs are the ones willing to be sacrificed for the sake of the Gospel, that others may be enlightened with the truth. Why? Because they already “died with Christ” ([Rom. 6:8](#)) and were raised with Him to life. The blood Jesus shed on the cross was also their blood. The blood of the Head is the also the blood of the body.

The Son and the Sons of God

John's use of the word *arnion* shows that the Lamb that is worthy to break the seals on the book is the New Creation Man, having Jesus Christ as his Head and the overcomers as his Body. This Body is made up of Amen people, those in agreement with Him, those who are fully reconciled to Him and have no resistance to God or His plan. This is what it means to “abide” in Christ.

The purpose of history has always been to bring forth this New Man in the image of Christ. Hence, as the seals are broken, history moves steadily toward this climactic event.

For this reason, not only did Jesus say, “*I have overcome the world*” ([John 16:33](#)), but we know that we too overcome the world by faith. We read in [1 John 5:4](#) (from *The Emphatic Diaglott*),

⁴ Because all that has been begotten by God overcomes the world; and this is that victory which overcomes the world—our faith.

That which is begotten by God is a son of God and a part of the collective New Creation Man. John saw this collective Lamb and understood that He was worthy to open the book. Yes, it is Jesus Himself, but not apart from His Body, for the Head is not complete without a Body. For this reason, the “Lamb” is not referred to as the *Amnos*, but as the *Arnion*.

This is your destiny as the *arnion* of God.

Chapter 14: The New Songs

The Lamb (*arnion*) in the book of Revelation is the prize creation of God. While it took seven days to create the first heavens and the first earth, it takes another seven “days” (7,000 years) to bring forth the New Creation Man. Then, like any babe that must grow after it is born, this New Creation Man also grows in stature (or numbers) until all creation becomes part of Him.

This is the key to understanding Revelation 5. As we will see shortly, even Bible commentators have difficulty comprehending this chapter, because it seems so, well, *universal*. Apart from believing the divine plan of universal reconciliation, it is not possible to understand what John revealed in this chapter.

This Lamb was found worthy to take the book and to open its seals. [Rev. 5:7](#) says,

⁷ And He came, and He took it out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.

First, we see that the Lamb knew His identity. He knew who He was and understood why He was worthy to take a book out of the right hand of the Father. This was not foolhardy confidence that many exhibit when they base their worthiness on their own fleshly worth or their own works. Taking the book “out of the right hand” of the Father indicates that the Lamb was accepting authority from the highest Sovereign of the Universe.

In [Gen. 48:18](#) the right hand was used to bless the first-born son and to give him the dominion mandate. [Exodus 15:6](#) says, “*Thy right hand, O Lord, is majestic in power.*” In [Lev. 8:23, 24](#) Aaron and his sons were anointed on their right ear, their right thumb on their right hand, and their big toe on their right foot when they were consecrated with the authority of priesthood. In [Matt. 26:64](#) Jesus was seen “*sitting at the right hand of power.*”

The twenty-four elders also bear witness to the reason for the Lamb’s worthiness in verse 9, as we will see shortly.

The Priesthood of the Elders

[Revelation 5:8](#) says,

⁸ And when He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, having each one a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

Because the elders have harps and “*bowls full of incense,*” they are pictured as priests offering incense in the temple of God. John, of course, was very familiar with temple activity, for through his mother he was of the high priest’s family. Of course, there is no *literal* incense in the temple in heaven, so John explains to us that incense represents “*the prayers of the saints.*”

Each also has a harp, which plays divine music. The priests were the musicians in the temple band and choir. David had a choir of 288 priests ([1 Chron. 25:7](#)). Their function was “*to prophesy with lyres, harps, and cymbals*” (25:1).

In 1 Corinthians 14, the apostle Paul speaks of the gifts of tongues and of prophecy, likening them to “*flute or harp*” ([1 Cor. 14:6, 7](#)). Just as the sound of a flute or harp must be distinct in order to be understood, Paul says, so also should tongues be interpreted in order to allow the people to do what God is telling them to do.

So the harp represents prophecy, and for this reason, David also prophesied by music when he played his harp, and the psalms were the lyrics sung to his music.

So [Rev. 5:8](#) pictures the Lamb taking authority to open the divine plan to our understanding, while the elders, by their harps, prophesy to reveal the divine plan to those who have offered incense to God.

Song #1: The Song of the Elders

[Revelation 5:9](#), [10](#) says,

⁹ And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to break its seals; for Thou wast slain and didst purchase for God with Thy blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nations. ¹⁰ And Thou hast made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.”

The Lamb was worthy because He was slain in order to redeem “*men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation*” who “*will reign upon the earth.*” Verse 10 says “*Thou hast made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God.*” Jesus, the Head, was the One who was slain to purchase the world by His blood, and this act of love was what made Him “worthy” to break the seals on the book.

Having redeemed them, they become “priests to our God.” The High Priest is Jesus Christ Himself, but the redeemed ones are also priests. There are some responsibilities that only the high priest was allowed to do, but priests are mini-representations of the high priest. Even as Jesus Christ is the Mediator between God and men ([1 Tim. 2:5](#)), so also priests are mediators between Christ and men in this work of redemption.

It seems blasphemous to say that any man or woman could participate in the redemptive work of Christ. But in [Rev. 6:9–11](#) (as we will see later), the martyrs were pictured as sacrificial lambs, whose blood was poured out under the altar. The sacrificial animals were all types of Christ; but yet John pictures the martyrs as sacrificial lambs whose blood was poured out under the altar. A martyr is literally a witness—in this case, a double witness to Christ’s greater sacrifice.

Reigning on the Earth

The song ([Rev. 5:10](#)) focuses upon the priestly overcomers who qualify to “*reign upon the earth.*” Not all believers are called to be rulers. The first resurrection at the start of the Millennium is a limited resurrection, where only the overcomers are raised—the rulers in the Kingdom. John says that representatives from every nation will be part of God’s government.

The overcomers who “*reign upon the earth*” must reign over others. Hence, this is not a song celebrating Universal Reconciliation. It is a song celebrating the formation of Kingdom government, sung by a choir of overcomers. Not until we come to the third song ([Rev. 5:13](#)) do we see the theme of Universal Reconciliation, sung by the rest of creation.

The song of the elders in [Rev. 5:9](#) and [10](#) is about the overcomers and the special reward they are given. They are the first to receive immortality, in order that they might establish divine government and “*reign upon the earth*” during the Tabernacles Age.

They do not reign in heaven, but on earth. This is consistent with the “stone” kingdom in [Dan. 2:35](#), which, after crushing the Babylonian image on its feet and grinding the image to powder, grows until it fills the whole earth. In other words, the Kingdom of God will include all the nations of the earth, as David prophesied in Psalm 67, and as John prophesied in [Rev. 11:15](#).

Song #2: The Song of the Angels

In [Rev. 5:11](#), [12](#) John saw an outbreak of joy and praise from the myriads of angels who suddenly emerge from the background to affirm the truth expressed in the song of the elders.

¹¹ And I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, ¹² saying [or

singing] **with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.”**

The fact that this is a song is not stated in so many words, but this is the implication. Of the first song, [Rev. 5:9](#) says, “*And they sang a new song, SAYING.*” This “saying” is not mere speaking, but singing, or expressing the words in song. So also are we to understand the second and third songs in this chapter.

The angels attribute seven things to the Lamb, which add to the revelation in the song of the elders. Seven is the number of spiritual perfection or completion. These seven things are not only rewards from the throne, but they are also what is needed to rule properly.

They need to have *power* to issue decrees, *riches* to finance the government, *wisdom* to know how to exercise power with love and mercy, *might* to enforce the laws and decrees of divine government when necessary, *honor* to gain the people’s respect through the power of forgiveness ([Psalm 130:4](#)), *glory* to have the character of Christ, and *blessing* as the seed of Abraham to dispense that blessing to all nations.

Chapter 15: Creation Sings in 4-Part Harmony

When the question arose in the divine Council meeting: “*Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?*” the answer was: “*Behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah.*” The Lion was worthy, but the Lamb took the book and opened it. This seems to suggest that the Lion was Jesus Christ by Himself, but that the Lamb (*arnion*) was a new entity—the Head *and body* of Christ.

The response from the twenty-four elders and the angels came as an Amen. They were in agreement, and this was the theme of their songs. The twenty-four elders sang, “*Worthy art Thou,*” and the angels sang, “*Worthy is the Lamb.*” Both cited as proof the fact that He “*was slain,*” for this qualified Jesus—and secondarily, His body—to open the Book of Creation and to know the divine plan and God’s intention for creation.

After the twenty-four elders and the angels finished singing their songs, all creation broke out in a song of rejoicing, for the broken seals had revealed that all creation would benefit from the death of the Lamb. [Rev. 5:13](#) says,

¹³ And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, “To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever.”

This scene has puzzled Bible teachers for centuries, because many cannot comprehend its sheer magnitude. Since the concept of the restoration of all things was lost back in the fifth and sixth centuries, the Church has adopted the view that only a few will be saved, and the rest consigned to eternal flames in hell.

But verse 13 entirely contradicts that teaching, for it shows “*every living thing*” in heaven, earth, under the earth, and in the sea praising and glorifying God. By no stretch of imagination can we say that any of these are being tortured in hell while they praise God.

In fact, this song of creation was prophesied in [Psalm 66:4](#),

⁴ All the earth will worship Thee, and will sing praises to Thee; they will sing praises to Thy name. Selah.

Was this mere wishful thinking? Was this a hope that stood beyond the power of God to fulfill? Will His New Covenant oath prove to be more than God was able to fulfill? In the end, is man’s will stronger than God’s will? Did God lack the power and wisdom to devise a plan that would fulfill the desire of His heart to save all? God forbid!

Comments from Theologians

The Expositor’s Bible, Vol. VI, page 854, explains [Rev. 5:13](#),

“What a sublime conception have we here before us! The whole universe, from its remotest star to the things around us and beneath our feet, is one—one in feeling, in emotion, in expression; one in heart and voice. Nothing is said of evil. Nor is it thought of. It is in the hands of God, who will work out His sovereign purposes in His own good time and way. We have only to listen to the universal harmony, and to see that it moves us to corresponding praise (v. 14).

“The redeemed creation is once more singled out for special mention. At chap. iv. 8, 10, they began the song; now we return to them that they may close it. All creation, man included, cries, Amen. The glorified Church has her heart too full to speak. She can only fall down and worship.”

The glorified Church, indeed, is full of praise at the divine plan which has succeeded in achieving its goal of universal reconciliation. But much of the present-day church chafes and grumbles at such an idea. I have observed over the years

that a great many people in the church are incensed at the idea that Christ's death on the cross might be effective for the whole creation.

I recall one preacher drawing himself up with indignation, saying, "One of the greatest pleasures in heaven will be when I look upon those sinners burning in hell!" He obviously had not read the book that Jesus opened in [Rev. 5:5](#), nor, would it seem, did the love of God dwell in him ([1 John 3:17](#)).

Because man is required to respond in order to be reconciled to God, many Christians do not think that God is capable of *causing them to respond*. They have more confidence in the will of man than in the will of God. This view is largely based on their assumption that the end of one's earthly life is the deadline for salvation, when in fact it is only the deadline before the final judgment, where every knee will bow and every tongue will confess Him as Lord ([Phil. 2:9–11](#)).

These are the key truths that most Christians have not understood since the first few centuries of the Christian era. Matthew Henry's [Commentary on the Holy Bible](#) (page 463) comments on [Rev. 5:13](#) as well, saying,

"This glorious song, thus begun by the church, and carried on by the angels, is echoed by the whole creation; all the creatures adore that great Redeemer, who delivers the creature from that bondage under which it groans, through the corruption of man, and the just curse denounced by the great God upon the fall ...

"Happy those who shall adore and praise in heaven, and who shall eternally bless the Lamb, who delivered and consecrated them by his blood. How worthy art thou, O God, thou and thy Son, that all creatures should proclaim thy greatness, and adore thy majesty! Let every spirit abase and humble itself before thee, and pronounce an Amen of confession and acknowledgement of the holiness and sovereignty of thy being; of adherence to thy will and pleasure, of approval, praise, adoration, and admiration of thy works; of the wisdom of thy dispensations, and of the relation every creature has to thy designs concerning Christ and his church."

These commentators cannot help but acknowledge the plain truth of this Scripture, telling us that all of creation will one day praise Jesus Christ in the manner that John saw. Matthew Henry tells us that this is the fulfillment of [Rom. 8:19–21](#),

¹⁹ For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

Such hope is only possible if God intends to reconcile all creation to Himself. It is NOT possible, if God intends to consign—or even to *allow*—the greater part of humanity to end up in an everlasting torture of hell with no hope of redemption.

The Meaning of *Eternal*

Perhaps the greatest impediment to seeing creation set free is bound up in the word "eternal." This word comes from the Hebrew word *olam* and the Greek word *aionian*. If these words can only mean "unending time," then we must of necessity treat "*aionian* judgment" as being everlasting.

However, a study of biblical language shows that this is NOT the case. The word *aionian* comes from the word *aion*, which means "eon, or age." For this reason, Dr. Robert Young's *Literal Translation of the Holy Bible* translates the word "age-during," which is ultra-literal. Rotherham's *The Emphasized Bible* renders it "age-abiding." Thus, the judgment to come is not for all time, but is limited to the duration of that particular age.

Likewise, the *aionian* life that believers hope to attain is not immortality itself, but life in a particular time frame that is not available to most others. This is life *in the Tabernacles Age*. Their promise is to inherit the first resurrection,

rather than waiting until the Great White Throne to receive their reward of immortality. Those few who inherit life in the first resurrection will have “life” during the great Sabbath Millennium. That is the special reward given to the overcomers. Paul refers to this in [1 Tim. 4:10](#),

¹⁰ For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers.

In other words, He will save all men, but there is a special salvation and reward for believers that the unbelievers will not receive. That reward is to receive immortality long before the rest of creation. For a more complete study of this word and what Bible commentators have to say about it, see chapters five and six of my book, [The Judgments of the Divine Law](#).

The Limits of Divine Judgment

God’s judgments are based upon His law, which expresses God’s character. Within the law are limits to the amount of judgment that can be meted out for sin. The law mandates a Jubilee for felonies ([Lev. 25:10](#)) and no more than 40 stripes for misdemeanors ([Deut. 25:1–3](#)). In fact, Paul’s teaching in Romans 8, where he foresees all of creation being set free, is based upon the law of Jubilee. [Lev. 25:10](#) says,

¹⁰ You shall thus consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim a release through the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you, and each of you shall return to his own property, and each of you shall return to his family.

The whole earth was sold into bondage because of Adam’s sin. But the day will come—that great day of Creation’s Jubilee—when every man will be released from that bondage and will “*return to his own property*” and “*family*.” Judgment will have run its course, and every creature described by John in [Rev. 5:13](#) and [14](#) will give praise to Jesus Christ and acknowledge that His plan was very good.

In the covenant that God made with Noah and “all flesh” in Genesis 9, He promised not to destroy the earth again by flood. He will instead send another kind of flood, a flood of the Holy Spirit so that His glory covers the earth as the waters cover the sea. God Himself took an oath in His own Court, saying in [Num. 14:21](#),

²¹ But indeed, as I live [God’s oath], all the earth will be filled with the glory of the Lord.

This oath binds God to fulfill it. If He were unable to do so (in view of man’s will), then He should never have made an oath that was impossible for Him to fulfill. But God bound Himself to overcome the power of sin and to fill the whole earth with His glory.

In his last words of the final psalm of the Exodus Book of Psalms, David recalled God’s oath and repeated it as a prayer. [Psalm 72:19, 20](#) says,

¹⁹ And blessed be His glorious name forever; and may the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen, and Amen. ²⁰ The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.

The prophet Isaiah too had this revelation from the throne room. [Isaiah 6:3](#) says,

³ And one called out to another and said, “Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory.”

Again, in [Isaiah 11:9](#), we read how even the animals will be reconciled in some way:

⁹ They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain [i.e., Kingdom], for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

The waters cover the sea about 100 percent. Hence, the glory of God will cover the whole earth as well, leaving no portion in darkness or ignorance. When the earth is “*full of the knowledge of the Lord*,” then will God’s New Covenant oath be fulfilled, for [Heb. 8:11](#) says, “*all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest of them.*”

[Habakkuk 2:14](#) agrees, saying,

¹⁴ For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

The Great Amen

[Rev. 5:14](#) tells us that four living creatures, representing all of creation, say “Amen,” not only in response, but in *agreement* with the divine plan that was written in the Book. According to the [Commentary on the Whole Bible](#), page 567,

“As in ch. 4.11, the four and twenty elders asserted God’s worthiness to receive the glory, as having created all things, so here the four living creatures ratify by their “Amen” the whole creation’s ascription of the glory to Him.”

The importance of this ratification by the four living creatures is apparent, because without it, the whole foundation for the restoration of all things might be doubted. But this double witness establishes by law the final purpose of God for the earth—that all living creatures will be reconciled to their Creator. All will glorify and praise His name when they finally come to the knowledge of who He is and what great work He has done in the history of His universe.

This is the Song of Creation, sung in four-part harmony.

Book 3

A study of Revelation 6–9.

Chapter 1: The First Seal

The sixth chapter of Revelation correlates with the sixth letter of the Hebrew alphabet, the *vav*, which is a connector. It literally means a nail or peg, something that joins two things. In this case, the fifth and sixth chapters are nailed together (or joined) by a *vav*.

Of course, the book of Revelation comes to us in Greek, not in Hebrew, so the first word is *kai*, “And.” But as always, we must think Hebrew, even if the language is Greek, because Greek was being used to express John’s Hebrew thought patterns. In other words, the climactic song of the reconciled creation at the end of chapter five is connected by the *vav* to the next chapter, where the Lamb opens the book, and John sees the unfolding of events leading to this climax.

In fact, what follows in the rest of the book of Revelation is a continuation of the divine court scene. The Lamb has taken the book and now opens it a step at a time to reveal the events of history recorded in this Book of Creation’s Destiny.

[Revelation 6:1](#) reads,

¹ And I saw when the Lamb broke one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying as with a voice of thunder, “Come.”

The text literally reads, “*And I saw when opened the Lamb one of the seven seals.*” In other words, when the first seal was broken, the book did not speak words as such, but a picture—a scenario—sprang forth, and John “saw.” Further, one of the four living creatures spoke with a loud voice, “*a voice of thunder,*” saying, “COME.”

The Four Leading Tribes

The first four seals are separated from the rest by the souls under the altar, who seem to interrupt the flow. Each of these four seals, when broken, loose one of the four living creatures to prophesy.

We have already shown how the four living creatures were pictured on the flags of the four leading tribes of Israel. We are now given insight regarding the broader representation of each of these creatures, along with each of their spiritual functions in history. Therefore, as we study each of the four horses with their respective seals, we must keep in mind that the four living creatures (Man, Lion, Eagle, and Bull) are connected to specific seals that are relevant to each.

When the first seal is broken, the first living creature, that is, the Man (Reuben), reveals to John a man on a white horse. When the second seal is broken, the second living creature, that is, the Lion (Judah), reveals to John a warrior on a red horse. When the third seal is broken, the third living creature, that is, the Eagle (Dan), reveals to John a judge on a black horse, having in his hand the scales of justice. When the fourth seal is broken, the fourth living creature, that is, the Bull (Joseph/Ephraim), shows John Death riding “a pale horse” (KJV), or “an ashen horse” (NASB), or more literally, a green (*chloros*) horse.

These four horses seem to represent the four winds of divine judgment. As each seal is broken, we see both a problem and a solution, similar to what we saw in the messages to the seven churches. The churches each had a problem that could be resolved by taking heed to the message given by each of the seven Spirits of God. So also do we see here that the four horses seem to represent forces of disunity, while the four beasts represent the unity and harmony which finally emerges victorious at the end of time. The solution is for all of creation to say “Amen” to God, instead of resisting their destiny as revealed in the divine plan.

Reuben, the Man whose name means “*Behold, a son,*” should properly represent Christ, the Son of God, but fleshly Reuben lost the birthright through sin ([1 Chron. 5:1](#)). First the natural, then the spiritual emerges. Fleshly Reuben fails in his calling, but in no way does this negate the prophecy of Christ that is inherent in his name. In fact, his story portrays the failure of flesh and the ultimate triumph of the spiritual Man. Yet both roles were pictured in a single man in the historical progression from disharmony to harmony.

Judah, the Lion, also represents Christ, who is called “*the Lion that is from the Tribe of Judah*” ([Rev. 5:5](#)). But fleshly Judah also sinned, not only by his infidelity with Tamar ([Gen. 38:26](#)), but also in betraying Joseph ([Gen. 37:26, 27](#)). So he, too, portrays both the failure of flesh and the ultimate triumph of the spiritual Lion-man.

Dan, the Eagle carrying away a serpent, represents Christ, to whom all judgment has been given ([John 5:26, 27](#)). But the fleshly tribe of Dan was particularly idolatrous and worldly, and in such a condition was not qualified to judge the world in righteousness. Nonetheless, Jesus Christ, who is the God of Israel, was portrayed as bringing Israel out of Egypt on eagles’ wings ([Exodus 19:4](#)). Again, we see the contrast between flesh and spirit, along with the ultimate triumph of the spiritual Danites—the saints who will judge the world ([1 Cor. 6:2](#)).

Joseph, the Bull with two horns (Ephraim and Manasseh), represents Christ as the “fruitful bough” ([Gen. 49:22](#)), or literally, the fruitful *son* (Hebrew, *ben*). His sons, too, were fleshly, and when Jeroboam led Israel into idolatry by setting up the two golden calves, one was placed in the far north in the city of Dan, while the other was placed in Bethel, a city in Ephraim ([1 Kings 12:29](#)). For this reason, the prophet Hosea renamed Bethel, calling it Beth-aven ([Hosea 10:5](#)). Thus he changed it from the House of God to the House of Empty Words, or Lies. Even so, the fruitfulness of Joseph will manifest in the end, when the fourth living creature says “Amen” to Christ and His plan for the earth.

Throughout the rest of the book of Revelation, it should be understood that John was shown a series of historical events which would bring the earth from beast rule to the Restoration of All Things. Hence, there is a progression of revelation, though by no means is it a complete book of history. It covers the highlights of history, the things that God deemed to be important for us to know and to understand.

The First Seal

[Revelation 6:2](#) says,

² And I looked, and behold, a white horse, and he who sat on it had a bow; and a crown [stephanos, “laurel wreath”] was given to him; and he went out conquering, and to conquer.

Each of the four horses pictured in Revelation 6 correlate with Jesus’ warnings in Matthew 24. In this way, we see the results of fleshly counterfeits that rule the earth prior to conforming to the true plan of God. In Matthew 24 Jesus talked about the fleshly temple in Jerusalem, telling His disciples that “*not one stone here shall be left upon another, which will not be torn down*” ([Matt. 24:2](#)).

The disciples then asked Him privately, “*when will these things be, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?*” ([Matt. 24:3](#)). Jesus then gave them the signs that would be seen, and these correlate with the first four seals in Revelation 6.

First, [Matthew 24:4, 5](#) says,

⁴ ... See to it that no one misleads you. ⁵ For many will come in My name, saying, “I am the Christ,” and will mislead many.

According to this warning, the one sitting on the white horse is the fleshly counterfeit of the true Christ, the man of flesh that usurps His place. On the personal side, it is fulfilled by all flesh, or the “old man” ([Rom. 6:6 KJV](#)), which sets itself up in opposition to the New Creation Man which is begotten of God.

On the historical side, which manifests the flesh on a collective (governmental) level in the behavior of nations, this has been seen in all of the beast nations. Every fleshly nation has the heart of a beast, in that its motives are based largely on survival instincts, and they enforce their will upon others by threats of violence designed to elicit fear.

In John's day the ruling beast nation was Rome.

Roman Government

The rider of the white horse is not Jesus Christ. All four riders in Revelation 6 represent different stages of government in the history of Rome. The white horse represents Rome at its height of glory, which began in 31 B.C. when it defeated Egypt in the battle of Actium. A few years later, in 27 B.C., the Roman Senate conferred upon Octavian the title of Augustus Caesar. Rome then ceased to be a Republic and became an Empire ruled by Emperors.

By the time Jesus was born in 2 B.C., the Roman Empire had proclaimed its *Pax Romana*, the time of peace and unparalleled prosperity and security. They actually began to disband some of their military legions. Such a Golden Age of Peace and Prosperity had been prophesied by Virgil, one of the Roman poets, and even Christians honored him for seeming to know the time of the birth of Jesus, the Prince of Peace.

Roman emperors and conquering generals rode white horses in their victory parades. The rider was given a crown. The Greek word, *stephanos*, referred to a laurel wreath of a conqueror, not a diadem of a king. This is what was given to the one sitting on the white horse in [Revelation 6:2](#). The height of Rome's power lasted from 27 B.C. until 180 A.D.

In the late 1700's, Gibbon wrote in his book, The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, pp. 41, 42,

"During a long period of two hundred and twenty years from the establishment of this artful system [27 B.C.] to the death of Commodus [180 A.D.], the dangers inherent to a military government were, in a great measure, suspended But Nero involved the whole military empire in his ruin. [He committed suicide in 68 A.D.] In the space of eighteen months four princes [emperors] perished by the sword; and the Roman world was shaken by the fury of the contending armies. Excepting this short, though violent, eruption of military license, the two centuries from Augustus to Commodus passed away unstained with civil blood, and undisturbed by revolutions."

In other words, the Roman Empire enjoyed great peace and prosperity for more than 200 years during this time of the "white horse."

Chapter 2: The Second and Third Seals

The first four seals in [Rev. 6:1–7](#) reveal the four colored horses that were released to bring divine judgment upon the fourth beast empire (Rome). The white horse, which is shown first, provides the reason for this judgment. Roman emperors had begun to be deified, usurping the rightful place of Christ as King of the nations. Hence, the emperors of Rome are pictured on the white horse, having a laurel wreath on their head as proud conquerors.

The second seal brings forth the red horse of war, and so we find Rome in turmoil, having to fight many wars to put down revolts across the empire. The second seal covers the time after 193 A.D., that is, beginning with Emperor Commodus, whose debauchery and unjust rule caused a major shift in Roman politics.

The Second Seal: The Red Horse (193–282 A.D.)

[Revelation 6:3](#), [4](#) says,

³ And when He broke the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, “Come.” ⁴ And another, a red horse went out; and to him who sat on it, it was granted to take peace from the earth, and that men should slay one another, and a great sword was given to him.

The time of relative peace and prosperity in Rome was broken in 193 A.D. after the murder of Emperor Commodus in 192 and the succession of three emperors in a single year. During the next 89-year period, Rome was plunged into one civil war after another. Gibbon attributes this primarily to the time when the personal bodyguards of the emperors, the Praetorian Guard, came to see that they were more powerful than the emperors themselves. Gibbon writes of this in his book on pages 56 and 57,

“The Praetorian bands, whose licentious fury was the first symptom and cause of the decline of the Roman empire, scarcely amounted to the last-mentioned number. They derived their institution from Augustus [27 B.C. to 14 A.D.]. That crafty tyrant, sensible that laws might colour, but that arms alone could maintain, his usurped dominion, had gradually formed this powerful body of guards, in constant readiness to protect his person, to awe the senate, and either to prevent or to crush the first motions of rebellion.”

Augustus Caesar had dispersed these Praetorian Guards out of Rome itself, but his son Tiberius had brought them back to Rome as his personal bodyguards. Gibbon says that under such an arrangement, it was only a matter of time before they would come to despise the corruption and personal weakness of the emperors, while taking note of their own military power. He writes on page 57,

“Such formidable servants are always necessary, but often fatal, to the throne of despotism. But thus introducing the Praetorian guards as it were into the palace and the senate, the emperors taught them to perceive their own strength, and the weakness of the civil government; to view the vices of their masters with familiar contempt, and to lay aside that reverential awe which distance only and mystery can preserve towards an imaginary power.”

Most of the emperors were corrupted by luxury and power and had few morals. In their moral weakness, they were easily flattered and manipulated by the worst of men. This situation generally became worse with each new emperor. The emperor Commodus (180–192 A.D.) was the worst of all the Roman emperors. Gibbon says of him on page 52,

“But every sentiment of virtue and humanity was extinct in the mind of Commodus... His hours were spent in a seraglio of three hundred beautiful women and as many boys of every rank and of every province; and wherever the arts of seduction proved ineffectual, the brutal lover had recourse to violence... and he was the first of the Roman emperors totally devoid of taste for the pleasures of the understanding ... Commodus, from his earliest infancy, discovered an aversion to whatever was rational or liberal.”

Gibbon then tells us on page 55,

“Commodus had now attained the summit of vice and infamy. Amidst the acclamations of a flattering court, he was unable to disguise from himself that he had deserved the contempt and hatred of every man of sense and virtue in his empire. His ferocious spirit was irritated by the consciousness of that hatred, by the envy of every kind of merit, by the just apprehension of danger, and by the habit of slaughter which he contracted in his daily amusements. History has preserved a long list of consular senators sacrificed to his wanton suspicion... His cruelty proved at last fatal to himself.”

Commodus finally murdered so many people that even his favorite concubine, Marcia, became afraid for her life. She then poisoned him, but before he could die, another man strangled him.

At this point in history, the Praetorian guards lost all respect for the emperors. They insisted that anyone who would be emperor must obtain their consent, and so they became, in effect, the kingmakers. In fact, these guards put Rome up for sale to the highest bidder for their own benefit, and from this point onward, the emperors were subject to the Praetorian guards. The emperors ruled in proxy for the military.

It started with the murder of Commodus' successor, Pertinax, who was killed by the guards (193 A.D.). Gibbon says of this incident on page 57,

“The Praetorians had violated the sanctity of the throne by the atrocious murder of Pertinax.”

The next emperor, Julian, bought his position for 6,250 drachms, outbidding his rival who had offered only 5,000. The Roman Empire thus entered into a period of civil war. In the next century, it would have 32 emperors and 27 pretenders. It was indeed a time of war and bloodshed, depicted by the Red Horse of [Rev. 6:4](#).

The Red Horse was revealed by the second living creature around the throne—the Lion of Judah. The biblical lion sets forth divine government as it ought to be administered. The government of Rome after the death of Commodus should be viewed in contrast to the government of Christ.

Because Rome held the dominion mandate that had been given to Babylon, then Persia, Greece, and then to Rome, God held these beast nations accountable for their actions. Breaking the seals, one after another, uncovered the truth of Rome's ungodly government, the dysfunction of immoral rule, and the downward spiral into judgment.

Thus, the Book of Destiny, written in heaven, bears witness of Rome's unacceptable behavior, as well as the reasons for divine judgment. Rome had begun by deifying men and usurping the authority of the dominion mandate, and this was followed by military men usurping the authority of the emperors themselves. The “vice and infamy” of deified men lead naturally to public aversion and to military rule. Hence, the Red Horse in 193 A.D. marked the shift from “civilian” power to military rule.

The Third Seal: The Black Horse (250–300 A.D.)

The third seal brings forth the black horse of famine, and we see severe famines from 250–300 A.D. [Rev. 6:5, 6](#) says,

⁵ And when He broke the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying, “Come.” And I looked, and behold, a black horse; and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. ⁶ And I heard as it were a voice in the center of the four living creatures saying, “A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius, and do not harm the oil and the wine.”

This speaks primarily of famine caused by war and other serious disruptions.

In the midst of this chaos comes a voice from the midst of the four living creatures: “A *choenix* [almost a quart] of wheat for a denarius, and three *choenices* of barley for a denarius.” Normally, the cost would be one-eighth of a

denarius. A denarius was a day's wage for a common laborer. In other words, a man would have to work eight days to purchase a measure of grain sufficient to make a loaf of bread.

In the days of Valerian, the emperor of Rome from 253 A.D. to his Persian captivity in 260, the eastern part of the Roman Empire was in turmoil. The Goths came across the Black Sea from the north and invaded the cities of Asia Minor and Greece. Gibbon says on p. 100, 101,

"At length the Gothic fleet anchored in the port of Piraeus, five miles distant from Athens, which had attempted to make some preparations for a vigorous defence

"A general conflagration blazed out at the same time in every district of Greece. Thebes and Argos, Corinth and Sparta, which had formerly waged such memorable wars against each other, were now unable to bring an army into the field, or even to defend their ruined fortifications."

"The temple of Diana at Ephesus, after having risen with increasing splendour from seven repeated misfortunes, was finally burnt by the Goths in their third naval invasion."

Soon afterward, the Persians invaded from the east, after destroying the Parthian Empire. (This destruction of Parthia by the New Persian Empire is what drove the Israelite tribes living in that area to Armenia as refugees and then into Europe as pioneers.) Rome's Emperor, Valerian, was defeated at Edessa and taken prisoner by Sapor, king of Persia. The Parthians then proceeded to plunder Asia Minor. Gibbon speaks of King Sapor on page 104,

"He despaired of making any permanent establishment in the empire, and sought only to leave behind him a wasted desert, whilst he transported into Persia the people and the treasures of the provinces."

About the same time, Rome's bread baskets, Sicily and Alexandria (Egypt), were ravaged by civil strife. Gibbon writes on page 109 about the situation in Sicily:

"The situation [location] of Sicily preserved it from the barbarians; nor could the disarmed province have supported a usurper. The sufferings of that once flourishing and still fertile island were inflicted by baser hands. A licentious crowd of slaves and peasants reigned for a while over the plundered country, and renewed the memory of the servile wars of more ancient times. Devastations, of which the husbandman was either the victim or the accomplice, must have ruined the agriculture of Sicily.... It is not improbable that this private injury might affect the capital more deeply than all the conquests of the Goths or the Persians."

As for Alexandria, Gibbon writes on pages 110, 111,

"After the captivity of Valerian and the insolence of his son had relaxed the authority of the laws, the Alexandrians abandoned themselves to the ungoverned rage of their passions, and their unhappy country was the theatre of a civil war, which continued (with a few short and suspicious truces) above twelve years

"But a long and general famine was a calamity of a more serious kind. It was the inevitable consequence of rapine and oppression, which extirpated the produce of the present and the hope of future harvests. Famine is almost always followed by epidemical diseases, the effect of scanty and unwholesome food. Other causes must, however, have contributed to the furious plague which, from the year two hundred and fifty to the year two hundred and sixty-five, raged without interruption in every province, every city, and almost every family of the Roman empire. During some time five thousand persons died daily in Rome, and many towns that had escaped the hands of the barbarians were entirely depopulated ...

"An exact register was kept at Alexandria of all the citizens entitled to receive the distribution of corn... it evidently proves that above half the people of Alexandria had perished; and could we venture to extend the analogy to the other provinces, we might suspect that war, pestilence, and famine had consumed, in a few years, the moiety [half] of the human species."

The book of Revelation attributes this famine to the opening of the third seal, in which God set loose the Black Horse and its rider. The Black Horse of famine was particularly devastating from 150–165 A.D., as Gibbon recorded (above), and close to half of the people in the Empire died either from war or starvation.

In [Rev. 6:5](#) the rider of the Black Horse was seen holding “*a pair of scales in his hand*,” a universal symbol of justice employed to this day. These were divine judgments loosed upon the Roman Empire for the depravity of the people and their despotic rulers.

The third living creature unsealing the events of this time period was the tribe of Dan, the “judge,” pictured as the eagle. The government of God requires equal and impartial justice for all ([Lev. 19:15](#); [James 2:1–4](#)). When men usurp the authority of Christ and thus deify themselves, the resulting tyranny eventually brings military rule—that is, rule by force and by fear. Then basic principles of justice are violated as farming is disrupted and food shortages bring about widespread theft and chaos.

Even military rule is insufficient to prevent chaos in the face of widespread famine. Such was the condition of the Roman Empire that was revealed by the broken seals in Revelation 6.

Chapter 3: The Fourth Seal

[Revelation 6:7, 8](#) says,

⁷ And when He broke the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, “Come.” ⁸ And I looked, and behold, an ashen [*chloros*, “green”] horse; and he who sat on it had the name Death; and Hades was following with him. And authority was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by the wild beasts of the earth.

When the first four seals are broken, each living creature in its turn says to John, “Come.” Why does he not say, “Look and see!”? Why not “Hear this!” Why “come”? Where was John supposed to go?

It appears that the living creature was inviting John into a different dimension so that he might witness events on earth that were yet to come. In [Rev. 4:1](#), John was invited to “*Come up here*,” where he witnessed the proceedings in the divine court in heaven. The seals were from the book in heaven, but the living creature wanted John to “come” back to earth to witness events that were to occur here.

This “ashen” (or green) horse was revealed by the fourth living creature, representing Joseph, or Ephraim, the Bull. Ephraim means “double fruitfulness,” and he received the birthright of his father, Joseph, who was “*a fruitful bough*” ([Gen. 49:22](#)). The blessing of Jacob was all about the abundance of fruitfulness “*with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lies beneath, blessings of the breasts and of the womb*” ([Gen. 49:25](#)). Moses adds his blessing “*with the choice things of the earth and its fulness*” ([Deut. 33:16](#)).

The blessings of the fourth living creature (the Calf, or Bull) around the throne are the blessings given to Joseph. Green is the color of life, resurrection, and abundance. But the fourth seal revealed the opposite being poured out upon the earth—that is, upon the Roman empire, the fourth beast.

Death of an Empire

Death is the inevitable result of the famine that was revealed by the third living creature. This was a time of famine, death, and decay of the Empire. At least one-fourth of the population of the Roman Empire perished during this time from famine or famine-related causes, such as disease. Gibbon estimates that close to half of the population of the Roman Empire died of starvation in just a 15-year period!

And so we date the Pale Horse era at the same time as the famine, particularly from 250–265 A.D. The fourth seal not only brought death to numerous individuals in the Empire, but it also brought death to the Empire itself. After Diocletian came to power in 284, he divided the Roman Empire into East and West a year later (285). Though the empire was reunified by Constantine thirty years later, even that reunification was temporary. Diocletian thus set the stage for the empire’s permanent division a century later. Gibbon says on page 124,

“Like Augustus, Diocletian may be considered as the founder of a new empire.

“After the example of Marcus, he gave himself a colleague in the person of Maximian, on whom he bestowed first the title of Caesar, and afterward that of Augustus.”

Seven years after splitting the Empire into two portions, the joint-emperors subdivided it again into four pieces. In 292 A.D., Diocletian and Maximian each appointed a lesser general with the title of Caesar to help them defend the empire from invasions. The other two Caesars were Galerius and Constantius.

Galerius, the Caesar of the East, later induced Diocletian to persecute and to destroy the Church. The result of this legislation brought about the terrible “tribulation” upon the church ([Rev. 2:10](#)) that lasted ten years (303–313 A.D.). However, most of this persecution was perpetrated in Italy and in the East by Maximian and Galerius. Constantius,

who was responsible for the defense of the western Empire (Gaul, Spain, and Britain) favored the Christians and half-heartedly prosecuted just enough of them to do his duty as a Caesar.

The division of the empire into four parts meant that there were now four royal palaces and courts to maintain, instead of just one. Gibbon writes on pages 131, 132,

“The empire was divided into four parts ... the political union of the Roman world was gradually dissolved, and a principle of division was introduced, which, in the course of a few years, occasioned the perpetual separation of the eastern and western empires.”

This division brought about a substantial increase in taxation as well in order to support the lavish courts of all four rulers. They competed with each other to portray greater pomp and luxury, and each had his own set of magistrates, ministers, and servants to fill their separate positions of government. The new taxes burdened the people further and added to the problem of famine that we saw earlier in the time of the third seal.

Comparisons to Matthew 24

As I mentioned earlier, breaking the four seals revealed the signs of “the end of the age” that Jesus listed in Matthew 24.

The first seal, displaying a counterfeit conqueror on a white horse, was described in [Matt. 24:4, 5](#),

⁴ And Jesus answered and said to them, “See to it that no one misleads you. ⁵ for many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will mislead many.”

The Roman emperors, who wore the laurel wreaths (*stephanos*) and rode white horses, were deified as gods—false messiahs.

The second seal, portraying war on a red horse, was described next in [Matt. 24:6, 7](#),

⁶ And you will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars; see that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end. ⁷ For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom ...

The Roman Empire began to experience revolts and wars from the death of Commodus in 193, resulting in the famines of the next phase of Roman history.

The third seal, portraying famine on a black horse, was described next in [Matt. 24:7, 8](#),

⁷ ... and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. ⁸ But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs.

The famines from 250–265 A.D. killed about half the population of the Roman Empire, setting the stage for the death (dissolution) of the Empire itself.

The fourth seal, portrays death, not only by famine, sword, and pestilence, but also “by the wild beasts of the earth” ([Rev. 6:8](#)). While the first three forms of death came universally upon the Empire, the last was reserved primarily for the Christians in the arenas to provide amusement for the non-Christian crowds. So Jesus said in [Matt. 24:9, 10, 13](#),

⁹ Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations on account of My name. ¹⁰ And at that time many will fall away and will deliver up one another and hate one another ¹³ But the one who endures to the end, he shall be saved.

These four signs are patterns that are not necessarily limited to the decline and fall of Rome. Nonetheless, we see these patterns emerge at “*the end of the age*,” that is, the end of the fourth beast’s dominion. The iron beast of Rome, described in [Dan. 7:7](#), was essentially broken up in 285 A.D., politically speaking, by Emperor Diocletian and further subdivided seven years later in 292.

The Gospel of the Kingdom

This division of empire occurred just before its “Christian” phase under Constantine, beginning in 313, which partially fulfilled Jesus’ closing statement in regard to this sequence of signs. He said in [Matt. 24:14](#),

¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come.

When the persecution of Christians ceased with Constantine’s Edict of Toleration (313 A.D.), the church had almost unprecedented opportunity to spread the Gospel to all nations. The problem was that by this time the church was quite carnal, and this mindset caused many leaders to seek political power and to destroy anyone who did not subscribe to their established creeds. Hence, for many centuries the opportunity to convert the world by the love of Christ and by the demonstration of His Spirit was largely lost.

Unfortunately, the church adopted the ways of the nations, even as Israel had desired in the days of Samuel, when they asked the prophet, “*appoint a king for us to judge us like all the nations*” ([1 Sam. 8:5](#)). Their desire to be ruled by men, rather than by God, was an affront to God. Nevertheless, He granted their request, for we read in [1 Sam. 8:7](#),

⁷ And the Lord said to Samuel, “Listen to the voice of the people in regard to all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them.”

God then chose Saul as their king. Though Saul’s anointing was legitimate, it was not the perfect will of God, and so his reign was to be temporary. Saul was then crowned on the day of “wheat harvest” ([1 Sam. 12:17](#)), which was what the people called Pentecost, or the feast of weeks.

Hence, Saul was a type of the church in the Pentecostal Age. From the time of Constantine on, the characteristics of Saul became increasingly apparent in the church, complete with Saul’s persecution of David. Its persecution of “heretics” included persecuting the overcomers as well, for the church lacked the discernment to know the difference. It only knew its creeds, which replaced genuine faith as the standard of orthodoxy.

This persecution, along with the earlier ten-year persecution under Diocletian, gave pause to the breaking of the seals to commemorate the souls whose blood had been poured out under the altar of sacrifice. Their voice is then heard crying out to God in the next few verses before the revelation of the three final seals.

Chapter 4: The Fifth Seal

When the first four seals were broken, the four living creatures around the throne were empowered to show John things to come. These four living creatures were pictured on the flags of the four leading tribes of Israel that were encamped around the Ark of the Covenant (God's throne on earth). The seals were broken counterclockwise beginning with the seal on Reuben (Man) on the south side, then moving to Judah (Lion) on the east, Dan (Eagle) on the north, and finally Ephraim (Bull) on the west side.

The Lamb was the only one worthy to take the book and to open the seals. He is a corporate Lamb and not just Jesus Christ Himself. As the Head of the Lamb's body (*arnion*), Jesus breaks the seals, but the living creatures do His bidding as the executor of Christ's will. The body provides His double witness to establish all things.

We then come to the fifth seal, which reveals the souls under the altar. [Rev. 6:9](#) says,

⁹ And when He broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained.

These are the overcomers who, as we will see later, are called to reign with Christ ([Rev. 20:4](#)). They bear witness ("testimony") of Christ. That is, they are the Amen people who, as a body, are Christ's double witness in the earth.

The Souls under the Altar

Christ's witnesses are not described as spirits, but as "souls," because "*the soul [nephesh] of the flesh is in the blood*" ([Lev. 17:11](#)). The blood of sacrifices was to be poured out under the altar ([Lev. 8:15](#)). Hence, we see the "souls" residing in the blood under the altar.

For this reason also Isaiah prophesied of the Suffering Servant who came "*as a lamb to the slaughter*" in [Isaiah 53:7 KJV](#). In [Isaiah 53:12 KJV](#) we read, "*He hath poured out His soul unto death*," where the soul is a reference to the blood being poured out under the altar.

From [Acts 8:32, 33](#) we know that Jesus Christ Himself was that Lamb. Paul identifies "God's elect" in [Rom. 8:33](#), and then he quotes David in [Psalm 44:22](#), showing how God's elect are also treated as sacrificial lambs. Paul says in [Rom. 8:35, 36, 37](#),

³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶ Just as it is written, "For Thy sake we are being put to death all day long; we were considered as sheep to be slaughtered." ³⁷ But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.

So when the fifth seal is opened in [Rev. 6:9](#), we discover that the slaughtered Lamb on some level includes all of the martyrs who bear witness of Christ's work on the cross. Their souls have been poured out under the altar of sacrifice as well. The world treats them as they treated Jesus, for we read in [1 John 2:6](#),

⁶ the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the manner as He walked.

Paul says that God's elect "*overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us*." How do they conquer? Through the love of Christ. The hatred of the world is designed to test love, and real love emerges from the persecution strong and firm, if not bruised and bloodied. No one, Paul says, can separate us from the love of Christ.

Those who hate God's elect are like Cain, who killed his brother ([1 John 3:12](#)). Such hatred characterizes the world, but not God's elect, for "*He who does not love abides in death*" ([1 John 3:14](#)). Of the elect, we read in [1 John 3:16](#),

¹⁶ We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

Therefore, it is evident that God looks upon all the martyrs as sacrificial lambs, whose blood has been poured out under His altar in the heavenly Temple. These are the *arnion* of God, and as a body joined to the Head, they too are found worthy to participate in the opening of the book and to break its seals.

In the end, the four living creatures around the throne represent all the tribes of Israel and, indeed, all of creation. Their privilege of breaking the first four seals prophesies of the day when all creation sings in 4-part harmony, bearing witness to the mighty works of God.

The Voice of the Martyrs

[Revelation 6:10](#) continues,

¹⁰ and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, wilt Thou refrain from judging [*krino*] and avenging [*ekdikeo*] our blood on those who dwell on the earth?”

These martyrs are not crying out for “vengeance” as would those who are carnal. We cannot interpret this with a Greek mindset, but understand it with Hebrew eyes in light of biblical law. Neither should we understand it through the lens of Judaism, for this is one area where the Jewish leaders greatly misunderstood the law.

Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount showed the contrast between the Jewish understanding of the law and Jesus’ own understanding. He did not put away the law, but showed its proper meaning. In [Matt. 5:43–45](#) Jesus said,

⁴³ You have heard that it was said, “You shall love your neighbor, and hate your enemy.” ⁴⁴ But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ in order that you may be sons of your Father ...

[Leviticus 19:18](#) says,

¹⁸ You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the Lord.

Judaism limited their love requirement to their fellow Jews, which gave them a license to hate their enemies (i.e., non-Jews). There is a difference between Hebrew thought and Jewish interpretations. Jesus renounced many of their interpretations of the law. In fact, [Lev. 19:33, 34](#) says,

³³ When a stranger resides with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. ³⁴ The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were aliens in the land of Egypt; I am the Lord your God.

The passage continues with the Law of Equal Weights and Measures, which establishes the will of God in treating all men equally in matters of justice. This law is set forth more plainly in [Num. 15:16](#),

¹⁶ There is to be one law and one ordinance for you and for the alien who sojourns with you.

Considering the fact that the martyrs are those who cannot be separated from the love of Christ, it is clear that we must not malign their motives when they cry out for justice in [Rev. 6:10](#). They long for true justice—not the “justice” of men, or even of religious men claiming to know the law of God.

The Avenger of Blood

The souls under the altar are not demanding vengeance for the terrible way in which the world treated them in their life on earth. John shows clearly in his first epistle that if they did not have a heart of love, they would not be overcomers, nor would they be bearing witness of the works of Christ.

The souls under the altar are seen crying out, “*How long, O Lord.. wilt Thou refrain from judging and avenging our blood...?*” The word translated “avenging” is *ekdikeo*, which means “to vindicate one’s right, to do justice.”

The manner in which one does justice is a different matter. Carnal judges may “avenge” in carnal ways; but those who know the heart of God will “avenge” according to the heart of God. Either way, the parent or guardian of the victim was responsible to intercede and to see to it that his ward was compensated for his loss. The law thus speaks of the “*avenger of blood*,” ([Deut. 19:12](#)), which is a poor translation. The word “avenger” is from the Hebrew word *ga’al*, which means a REDEEMER.

The Hebrew word *dam*, “blood,” does not mean bloodshed, but kinship. Hence, he is the *Kinsman Redeemer*, not the “avenger of blood” as some understand it. This was the term for the legal guardian (or judge) of the extended family who was responsible to maintain law and order and to resolve disputes according to the procedure given in [Matt. 18:15–20](#).

The souls under the altar thus appeal to Christ as their Kinsman Redeemer, asking Him to rectify the wrongs done to them and to *redeem* their blood. This is not an appeal to destroy those who killed the martyrs, nor even to give the wicked ones what they “deserve.” What they deserve is what Jesus took upon Himself on the cross, for that is the meaning behind all sacrifice in the temple.

Jesus Himself showed the purpose of His sacrifice on the cross, saying in [John 12:32, 33](#),

³² “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself.” ³³ But He was saying this to indicate the kind of death by which He was to die.

In other words, if Jesus were “*lifted up*” on the cross, then it becomes certain that He will become their Kinsman Redeemer and will “*draw all men*” to Himself. He was using the prophetic metaphor of the serpent being lifted up in the wilderness which, if men looked upon it, they were healed ([John 3:14, 15](#)). Under the Old Covenant, their healing depended on their response, but under the New Covenant it depended upon God’s oath. In this case, Jesus was sent to earth to fulfill that oath, and so it was effective for the whole world.

The Hebrew word *ga’al*, “redeemer,” is spelled with three Hebrew letters: *gimel*, *alef*, and *lamed*. The *gimel* is literally a camel, but it signifies being “*lifted up*.” The *alef* and *lamed* spell the word *El*, which is “God.” So *ga’al* literally means “to lift up God.” Hence, Jesus used this word picture of being lifted up on the cross as a subtle claim to deity as well as to show Himself as the Kinsman Redeemer, who would draw all men to Himself.

We see, then, that the martyrs cry out for the word of Jesus to be fulfilled. They do not cry out for divine “vengeance” upon those who shed their blood. Because they have the mind of Christ, they cry out for Jesus to fulfill His promise that if He was lifted up on the cross, He would draw all men to Himself. This is the true justice and “vengeance” of God. While the law holds every sinner accountable for sin, Jesus came as the Lamb of God to pay the penalty for the sin of the world.

Stephen’s Example

Among these martyrs, no doubt, was Stephen, the first Christian martyr, who, as he was dying, asked the Judge not to charge his executioners with his murder ([Acts 7:60](#)). In this, he was following Jesus’ own example, who forgave them as He died on the cross.

Stephen was surely among the “*souls under the altar*.” Yet I cannot imagine Stephen complaining that God had not yet “avenged” his murder. To do so would seem quite inconsistent with his desire to forgive them.

Overcomers are forgivers, because they live by the principle of the Jubilee. It is not that they refuse to judge sin or to hold sinners accountable, for there are many times when such judgment is necessary to bring repentance and spiritual growth to the sinner. This is why God holds us accountable—and, in fact, if we are not disciplined, we are not His children ([Heb. 12:5–8](#)).

Nonetheless, divine judgment, when administered by the mind and heart of God, is designed to correct the heart, not to destroy the person. The overcomers have the heart of God and would never cry out to God to destroy forever those who mistreat them. Their prayer is to bring judgment in order to restore the lawful order and bring all things under the feet of Christ.

The Answer to Prayer

[Rev. 6:11](#) shows God’s answer to their prayer:

¹¹ And there was given to each of them a white robe; and they were told that they should rest for a little while longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, should be completed also.

God’s intent is to judge all sinners *as a group* at the end of the age when they are raised to stand at the Great White Throne ([John 5:28, 29](#); [Rev. 20:12](#)). Each sinner who condemned the martyrs to death will be judged individually; however, they will be judged collectively at the same time. Likewise, the overcomers themselves will be rewarded at the same time as a group. So God tells the martyrs to be patient until the rest of their brethren should be killed.

There are martyrs in every generation, and the body of Christ must be formed of the dust of the ground gradually from the beginning to the end of the age. Yet these martyrs are given a white robe even before the final rewards are dispensed. Partial rewards are like first fruits that promise a greater harvest in the time to come. So also the white robes are a promise of a greater reward yet to come.

Two Garments as Rewards

Some have been taught that when believers die, they receive their eternal reward immediately, entering into the full glory that is due them for their faithfulness. But Jesus says in [Rev. 22:12](#),

¹² Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.

No doubt this is what the martyrs were told in [Rev. 6:10](#) as they were given white robes. The white robes, of course, represent “*the righteous acts of the saints*” ([Rev. 19:8](#)). They are depicted in types and shadows as the linen garments of the priests in the tabernacle and temple which they were to wear while ministering to God in the Sanctuary ([Ezekiel 44:17, 18, 19](#)). But when we study that passage, we see that the priests actually possessed two garments.

The priests were to minister to God in their linens, but they were not allowed to minister to the people while wearing linen. To minister to the people in the outer court they were to “*put off their garments in which they have been ministering and lay them in the holy chambers*,” and “*put on other garments*” ([Ezekiel 44:19](#)). These “other garments” cause sweat ([Ezekiel 44:18](#)). In other words, they are made of wool, not linen.

Garments of wool, then, depict mortal bodies—the result of the curse ([Gen. 3:19](#)). The martyrs had been disrobed of their woolen garments when their bodies were killed. In their appeal to the divine court, God then gave them white linen, or spiritual garments. This was a good reward, but it still did not give them access to the “outer court,” which would allow them to minister directly to the people on earth (who live in the “outer court” realm). The final reward

(yet withheld) was resurrection, by which all overcomers will be given access to both sets of garments in order to fulfill the requirements of priesthood as seen in [Ezekiel 44:17-19](#).

The two garments are explained by the Apostle Paul in [2 Cor. 5:1-5](#). There Paul tells us that we have two garments (or tents, tabernacles). One is being held for us in the heavens, which, when given to us, will clothe us with immortality. The present garment that we wear is the mortal body, in which “*we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven*” ([2 Cor. 5:2](#)).

Of course, the final reward, given at the resurrection of the dead, will not be the same body that we have worn out during our sojourn on the earth during our life time. We are not like the skeptics in Paul’s day who objected, asking, “*with what kind of body do they come?*” ([1 Cor. 15:35](#)). Paul answers this in [1 Cor. 15:42-45](#),

⁴² So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body; ⁴³ it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; ⁴⁴ it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.... ⁴⁵ So also it is written, “The first man, Adam, became a living soul.” The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

The “natural” (*psukikos*, “soulish”) perishes and is replaced by a “spiritual body.” This does not mean that the resurrected one has only one type of body at a time, first natural, and then spiritual. His comparison of the two Adams shows how we will be changed from soulish to spiritual.

Jesus was begotten by God. We were all born of natural parents, having “soulish” bodies. But when we are begotten a second time—this time by the Holy Spirit—that holy seed is a spiritual man having a spiritual body and wearing a spiritual garment. The goal is not to be divested of a physical body and live continuously in a spiritual body. The goal is to have both garments, so that, as priests of God, we may minister to God in heaven and to men on earth. Yet to do this requires the resurrection from the dead, because it is then that we are given direct access to both worlds.

Because the first resurrection is limited to the few ([Rev. 20:5](#)), there will still be much work for those overcomers to do as “*priests of God and of Christ*” ([Rev. 20:6](#)). The rest of humanity will need ministry, but it is unlawful to minister to these “outer court” people while dressed in linens, or heavenly garments ([Ezekiel 44:19](#)). At the same time, in order to minister to men properly and effectively, their other garments must be like that body in which Jesus Himself was raised. For this reason, even their physical bodies must be changed into something different from that with which we are presently familiar. [1 Cor. 15:51](#), [52](#) thus says,

⁵¹ Behold, I tell you a mystery [secret]; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed ⁵² in a moment [atomos, “atomic change”] in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.

Therefore, when the martyrs are given white robes after appealing to the divine court for justice, it is plain that they were not receiving their entire reward, but only a partial reward. The white robes allowed them to minister to God in the heavenly Sanctuary, but not directly to the people on earth. There will yet be a greater reward given to them, after they have rested a while.

[Rev. 6:11](#) does not say anything further, but we know from the end of the book that they must await the resurrection of the dead, at which time Christ will give them new earthly garments. They will then have the ability to change clothing at will, so that they may minister to God in the heavenly sanctuary or to men in the outer court.

Chapter 5: The Sixth Seal

We now come to the sixth seal, which speaks of divine judgment upon the Roman Empire, which began in 310 A.D. when Constantine became Emperor. [Rev. 6:12](#) says,

¹² And I looked when He broke the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth made of hair, and the whole moon became like blood;

As usual, this section begins with the Hebrew connector, “and,” which shows a progressive revelation built upon the previous section. This seal opens with “*a great earthquake*,” which, in prophecy, can represent either a literal quake or an event which emotionally or politically shakes the people and nations. Natural disasters, when they occur, may also foreshadow great political changes. This may be the way we are to interpret the great shaking prophesied in [Haggai 2:6, 7](#) at the end of the age.

Such natural phenomena often depict political and social events. The sun represents the king, and the moon the political establishment who “reflect” (or carry out) the decrees of the king. After the change in government from Diocletian to Constantine, the moon represented (or included) church leaders who reflected the will of the new emperor.

The blackened sun describes a solar eclipse. The red moon becoming “*like blood*” describes a lunar eclipse. Certainly, this is how any reader in John’s day would have understood his metaphor.

This change in the political order of Rome also brought about a change in the church. This is reflected in the change from the persecuted “Smyrna” church to the church of Pergamum which in turn runs parallel to the Old Testament “Balaam” church.

The Great Change (313 A.D.)

As I showed earlier, the final ten “days” (303–313 A.D.) leading to Constantine’s Edict of Milan were characterized by the most intense persecution in the history of the Empire. Hence, the fifth seal portrays the persecuted ones as “*souls under the altar*,” just before the fall of the pagan empire in the sixth seal.

However, persecution was not uniformly carried out in the empire during these ten years, because Constantius and his son, Constantine, carried out the edicts of the Emperor only minimally in Britain, Spain, and Gaul. As their power increased—and especially after the death of Constantius—his son aggressively forced his fellow caesars to adopt a spirit of tolerance. First the Edict of Toleration (311 A.D.) and then the Edict of Milan (313 A.D.) granted religious freedom especially to Christians.

In the great shaking that took place in the early fourth century, the Empire itself did not disintegrate; rather, the new Emperor (Constantine) changed it into a different sort of Empire. For a few years Christianity and other religions were given relative freedom of religion. But the sun of paganism was setting, and it would only be a matter of time before the Christian emperors would restrict and finally abolish the practice of paganism. They closed the pagan temples and converted them into Christian temples. Their pagan statues were renamed in honor of Christian saints.

The sun being darkened depicts Constantine’s conquest of the Roman Empire and the beginning of the end of the pagan gods, particularly the god of the sun. It is of interest to note that Constantine himself had earlier considered himself to be under the special protection of the sun god, although this changed after his vision of the cross just before the crucial battle before he took Rome.

Previous emperors beginning with Julius Caesar had used the pagan title of Pontifex Maximus (Latin for “High Priest”). Constantine at first assumed that title, then later abandoned it. Constantine also threw out the heathen standards of the Roman army and substituted the Cross in their place. Pagan temples were closed and heathen sacrifices

banned. The great “earthquake” hit the entire political structure of the Roman Empire, and the pagan rulers fell from their positions of authority and were replaced by Christians. This was an unprecedented revolution in Roman history.

The Moon Turns to Blood (325 A.D.)

The moon became as blood. An eclipse blots out the sun or moon for a short time, but afterward they emerge as seemingly new entities. Hence, eclipses were viewed as omens of change. Kings, nations, or powers were in danger of being overthrown and replaced by new ones. In this case, the church bishops emerged as the new power brokers of New Rome.

The moon is a symbol of the Church. This phase of prophecy began in 325 A.D. when the Church held its first Council at Nicea. The Emperor himself called for this Council in order to establish unity in the Church and in the empire itself after the controversy erupted over the nature of God and the trinity.

It is not our purpose to discuss these doctrinal disputes here, but rather to show that the Nicean Council set a precedent in how the Church would deal with those who might deviate ever so slightly from the official decisions of the majority of bishops. Some men believed that Jesus Christ was of *the same* essence as the Father while some said He was of *like* essence. Each side seemed more than willing to spill the blood of the other side over theoretical minutiae that really made no practical difference in one’s Christian walk.

In the bloody dispute over precise terminology that might define God and Christ, they only splintered all the more with the introduction of other terms that seemed more suitable. The arrogance of men thinking that their carnal minds could precisely define an infinite God is truly astounding. But that is precisely the pride of the carnal mind and the religious spirit. And the fact that they were willing to shed blood over the use or misuse of a single word shows the fanaticism of the carnally-minded rulers of the Church.

Not a single Church Council truly met to pray about their doctrinal differences. Those who came in a spirit of love could do little to influence the proceedings. Not a single Church Council apparently had the ability to hear God’s voice and to receive a true revelation of truth in the spirit of the prophets and apostles. They came to argue, to make deals behind the scenes, even to threaten or bribe the votes of fellow bishops. This was how “truth” was established “by the Holy Spirit.”

Hence, the Church came to be ruled by religious politics, and the Church Councils established “traditions of men” in the same way that the Jews had done in previous centuries.

And so the year 325 A.D. and the Council of Nicea marks the beginning of the time where the moon (Church) would begin to turn to blood. The light of revelation in the Church dimmed with each new tradition of men that they established with the sword and the bribe.

The Stars of Heaven

[Revelation 6:13](#) says,

¹³ and the stars of the sky [*ouranou*, “heaven”] fell to the earth, as a fig tree casts its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind.

The stars were called metaphorically “*the sons of God*” ([Job 38:7](#)). Many religions taught that the stars were literally the gods or great men and women who took their place among the stars in the afterlife. Today we know that stars are not literal people, yet they represent the saints, or overcomers.

John saw that the stars “*fell to the earth*.” Among the casualties of the newly-empowered Church religion were the overcomers. These were men and women who, like Christ, had no personal ambitions and did not value wealth. Overcomers seldom, if ever, became bishops, because it required too much political ambition to hold such a position.

When the Church came to be ruled by the traditions of men, anyone having a genuine revelation from God was likely to find himself differing with official Church leaders both in doctrines and methods. This was certainly the case with Jesus Himself, who was always at odds with the religious hierarchy of His day. The overcomers, in following His example, could not help but be among the “heretics” from that moment to the present day. And so the Church took the sword from pagan Rome and continued the persecutions—but now in the name of Jesus Christ.

The overcomers—the stars of heaven—fell as unripe figs, for they died at an unripe age. The “stars” of [Rev. 6:13](#) are “*the host of heaven*” in [Isaiah 34:4](#), where we read,

⁴ And all the host of heaven will wear away, and the sky will be rolled up like a scroll; all their hosts will also wither away as a leaf withers from the vine, or as one withers from the fig tree.

The stars in Revelation 6 fall to the earth (in death), while Isaiah sees them wearing away, or dwindling in numbers. This is mentioned again in [Dan. 7:25](#), where the “little horn” wears down the saints. Daniel uses the Chaldean word *bela*, which the KJV translates as “wear out.” Strong’s Concordance tells us that it means “to afflict” and is from the root word *balah*, “to fail; by impl., to wear out, decay.” To wear down or decay means to diminish the size of the body or object.

Daniel tells us that this little horn (power) comes as an extension of the fourth kingdom (Rome) and succeeds in overpowering the saints for a season ([Dan. 7:21](#)). Thus, we see the Church—the new Roman power—afflicting the saints, persecuting them, and diminishing their numbers, either by forcing them to recant their views of the Word or by executing them as heretics.

Heavenly Revelation Closes

[Revelation 6:14](#) says,

¹⁴ And the sky [*ouranos*, “heaven”] was split apart [“parted asunder”] like a scroll when it is rolled up; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

This is not talking about literal mountains, islands, or the literal sky splitting apart. Men used to write things on scrolls until about 360 A.D., when they began to bind together smaller sheets as *books*. Heaven being rolled up as a scroll speaks of the revelation of God being rolled up like a scroll. In other words, it is like closing a book. This is what happens when church leaders—like an eclipsed moon—become red like blood. When men prefer the traditions of men to the revelation of God, the Spirit of Truth departs, and divine revelation diminishes or ceases altogether. The word of God becomes a closed book.

And so, as time passed, the Church stopped teaching the Bible to the average Christians. In 663–664 Pope Vitalian of Rome mandated that the Church liturgy itself be spoken only in Latin, depriving more and more people from understanding anything other than to remain subservient to the Church leaders.

Any real understanding of the Word of God dropped to a very low level for more than a thousand years. The Bible became a closed book, and did not begin to reopen until Gutenberg’s use of the printing press in 1452 A.D. His first project was the Bible. This began to bring the Scriptures back to the common people. We will have more to say about this when we study the “little book” that is opened in Revelation 10.

Judgment upon the Rulers

The judgment upon the kings and other great men of the earth at the end of Revelation 6 is referring to specific events that occurred in the early fourth century. Though the basic principle may be applicable to modern times, the historical fulfillment of these verses took place when God judged pagan Rome. [Rev. 6:15–17](#) says,

¹⁵ And the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; ¹⁶ and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; ¹⁷ for the great day of their wrath has come; and who is able to stand?

This is a graphic way of describing the fear among the wealthy and powerful pagans, who were apprehensive about their own future under Constantine and the other Christian Emperors who succeeded him. Constantine had a policy of toleration, but within a century paganism itself was banned under Theodosius, who ruled from 379–395.

In 380 Theodosius declared the Roman Empire to be “Christian.” In 395 he banned all pagan animal sacrifices, closed the pagan temples, and prohibited pagan rites. Gibbon writes on page 409 of his The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,

“The ruin of Paganism, in the age of Theodosius, is perhaps the only example of the total extirpation of any ancient and popular superstition, and may therefore be considered as a singular event in the history of the human mind.”

Although the Roman senate still had a pagan majority, these senators saw that their political future hinged on their conversion to the religion of the Emperor. Gibbon says on page 410 that up to that time “*paganism was still the constitutional religion of the senate.*” But in 395 the great families of Rome submitted to the Christian religion and concurred in the abolition of paganism. Gibbon writes on page 412,

“The hasty conversion of the senate must be attributed either to supernatural or to sordid motives; and many of these reluctant proselytes betrayed, on every favourite occasion, their secret disposition to throw aside the mask of odious dissimulation. But they were gradually fixed in the new religion, as the cause of the ancient became more hopeless ...”

The problem, of course, was that many remained secret pagans even while they maintained membership in the Roman church. In time, their secret paganism added perversions of Christianity, the worship of Mary Magdalene in particular, who was identified with Persephone, the ancient goddess. Thus, Mary (the mother of Jesus) and Mary Magdalene (the supposed wife of Jesus) were honored, one by the many and the other by many of the old nobility. Catholicism included an overt and a covert religion under the same roof, which has only recently been uncovered by authors such as Dan Brown and Laurence Gardner.

This is what happens when men are forcibly converted to another religion, or when they feel threatened by religious persecution. Beginning with the Council of Nicea in 325 A.D., the church began to rely upon their creeds rather than upon the revelation of the word. Faith in Christ was replaced by faith in the church. The light of revelation waned; the artificial light of men’s traditions replaced it. The moon was darkened and turned red like blood, no longer lightened by the sun but darkened by the shadow of the earth.

Another important consequence of this political earthquake was seen in the transfer of the Empire’s capital to Constantinople—a new city, free of pagan temples—that Constantine built on the Black Sea at the border of Europe and Asia. This transfer occurred in 330 A.D. Constantine never again saw Rome. Constantinople quickly became more important than Rome itself.

The Sons of Constantine

Constantine died on Pentecost, May 22, 337 A.D. Throughout his reign, he adhered to his original policy of religious toleration, not only for Christians but for pagans as well. Philip Schaff writes about Constantine in his History of the Christian Church, Vol. III, p. 34,

“Nevertheless he continued in his later years true upon the whole to the toleration principles of the edict of 313, protected the pagan priests and temples in their privileges, and wisely abstained from all violent measures against heathenism, in the persuasion that it would in time die out.”

After Constantine’s death, however, this policy of toleration was reversed by his sons. Schaff says in Vol. III, page 38,

“The sons of Constantine did their Christian education little honor, and departed from their father’s wise policy of toleration.”

Though Constantine had reunited the Empire (after Diocletian had divided into four pieces), he divided it among his three sons upon his death. His sons, being adherents of a religion rather than true Christians from the heart, fought among themselves. To make matters worse, the sons were divided by religious belief as well. Constantius had adopted Arianism, the sect banned by the Council of Nicea in 325, while his two brothers were orthodox. The result of this was that Arianism dominated the East for the next 40 years, while the Orthodox view dominated the West.

Constantine’s sons did not act as true Christians but fought each other in the manner of all other despots seeking power. In 340 Constantine II was killed by his brother Constans, who was in turn killed by another rival, Magnentius ten years later. Constantius then defeated Magnentius in 353 and ruled the Empire until he died in 361.

In Constantinople, Constantius zealously persecuted the non-Christians, destroyed and robbed pagan temples, gave the booty to the Church, and even tried to impose the death penalty against those who would dare make a pagan sacrifice or worship the images of the gods. But after visiting Rome in 357 and seeing how utterly pagan the city was, he abandoned any further attempt to enforce this law.

Perhaps then he began to understand why his father had abandoned Rome for a freshly built city in the East, which had no pagan temples or altars. Constantius was polite enough to visit the Roman temples, permitted them to sacrifice, and confirmed privileges upon their priests.

Paganism’s Last Revival

After Constantius died in 361, an inevitable backlash occurred. His nephew Julian (“the Apostate”) was one of the few who had escaped the slaughter when Constantine’s three sons fought for the throne. The abuses that he saw firsthand caused him to reject Christianity, though he received a nominal Christian education and was raised in the sterile atmosphere of ritualistic Christianity.

Julian revolted against this. Constantius’ partial prohibition of such classic Roman authors as Homer, Plato, and Aristotle made him determined to study their writings with greater devotion. Julian himself dated his rejection of Christianity to 351, when he was just 20 years of age, but wisely kept his apostasy hidden. Then in 355 he went to Athens, where he was initiated in the Eleusinian mysteries, completing his transition.

The sudden death of Constantius in 361 brought Julian to the throne, and then he felt secure enough to openly repudiate Christianity. During his short reign of only 18 months, he showed himself to be a brilliant military commander, and an outstanding intellectual with great executive ability, having good moral character that far exceeded most emperors. However, he was bitterly opposed to Christianity and made it his life’s mission to reinstate the worship of the Roman gods.

Julian called into the open a multitude of pagan priests who had gone into hiding. He also attempted to reform paganism with many precepts of Christianity to enhance its morality and reduce its excesses. His zealous reforms of paganism actually caused him to lose support among many of the pagan priests, much like later Christian reformists were persecuted by the bishops and popes who preferred money and the life style and concubines that money could purchase. Julian discovered too late that the religion he sought to revive was morally worse than the Christianity that he sought to suppress.

Julian's attack on Christianity took the form of religious toleration, rather than open persecution. Open persecution had not worked in earlier centuries, he knew, so his tactic was to legalize all the various factions of Christianity which had been suppressed since the Council of Nicea—the Arians, Apollinarians, Novatians, Macedonians, and Donatists. His policy of religious toleration was not so different from the modern idea of freedom of conscience. Competing denominations were put on an equal footing while Julian ruled the Empire.

For this, of course, he was castigated by the more orthodox Christian leaders, who held the view that there was only "one Church" and its legitimacy was upheld by the Church Councils. Hence, his name has been immortalized by the epithet, Julian the Apostate.

Julian died in his prime on June 27, 363 A.D. Buried with him was the last chance for the revival of paganism as such. Even so, Schaff says, at the end of the fourth century, there were still 152 pagan temples in Rome, along with 183 smaller chapels dedicated to various deities.

Rome Officially Becomes a Christian Nation (380 A.D.)

The death of Julian ended the rule of the Constantinian family. Julian was succeeded by Jovian, a Christian general who was chosen by the army. He ruled just eight months, however, and was succeeded by Valentinian, who ruled until his death in 375. Both Jovian and Valentinian adopted Constantine's policy of religious toleration.

Valentinian felt that he needed help in ruling such a large empire, and so in March 364 he appointed his brother Valens as co-emperor. Though Valentinian was orthodox, Valens was Arian and was thus a "heretic" as viewed by the Council of Nicea in 325. Valentinian ruled from the capital of the empire, Constantinople, but gave Rome to his brother. After Valentinian died in 375, Valens persecuted the orthodox Christians until his death in 378.

Valens was killed in the Battle of Adrianople on August 9, 378. This was the disastrous battle against the Goths, Alans, and Huns, wherein two-thirds of the Eastern Roman army was killed, and it marked the beginning of the end of the Roman Empire.

After Valens died in 378, Gratian succeeded him. Yet with the Roman army so decimated, Gratian was unable to defend the empire from the incursions of the "barbarians," so he promoted Theodosius as co-emperor of the East on January 19, 379. Theodosius in the East and Gratian in the West agreed to make Orthodox Christianity the official religion of Rome in 380 A.D.

Though in some ways they continued the policy of toleration among Christians, they ended the public support for the pagan temples, confiscated temple properties, and withdrew privileges of pagan priests. Paganism then became fully dependent upon voluntary offerings from the people. In 382 Gratian removed the statue and altar of Victoria from the senate building in Rome. Paganism's days were numbered, but Gratian was assassinated the following year.

The political upheaval (earthquake) did not take place all at once, but over a period of time from 313–395 A.D. In 395 the Emperor Theodosius died, and the Empire was divided between his two sons. Honorius was made Emperor of the West at the age of nine, and he set up his capital in Milan. His older brother, Arcadius, was 17 or 18, and so he was given the Eastern portion of the Empire, based in Constantinople, for that was considered to be the greater inheritance.

This began the final break-up of the Roman Empire. In 410 Rome was overrun and sacked by the Goths, and for the next half century, the Western half of the Roman Empire gradually disintegrated.

Chapter 6: The Mountains Moved

[Rev. 6:14](#) speaks of the “scroll” of the word being rolled up, implying that the revelation was sealed up. While no seal is mentioned in chapter six, we find that it is the main topic of the next chapter, when the 144,000 are sealed. The revelation of God is in them, picturing them as “unripe figs” cast to the ground as martyrs and as a scroll that is rolled up.

When these are martyred for the testimony of Jesus, their word remained sealed to those who persecuted them. Understanding of the word was diminished in the church during the Age of Pentecost. Even as King Saul, the Pentecostal, persecuted David, the overcomer, so also did the church under Pentecost persecute the overcomers. Even as Saul was cut off from the word that was in David, so also was the revelation of the word cut off from the church during the Age of Pentecost.

Later, as we will see when we study [Rev. 7:13–17](#), we are told that the 144,000 are “*the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*” This does not mean that they survived this war on the saints. It means the opposite, for verse 15 says, “*for this reason they are before the throne of God; and they serve Him day and night in His temple.*” Verse 16 adds that “*they shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore.*” The implication is that, having been killed, they are beyond the reach of the persecutors, serving God in His temple in heaven.

When the overcomers fall prematurely to the earth as unripe figs, their revelation is not lost but is *sealed from the church*.

Upheavals among the Nations

[Revelation 6:14–17](#) says,

¹⁴ ... and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. ¹⁵ And the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; ¹⁶ and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; ¹⁷ for the great day of their wrath has come; and who is able to stand?”

The persecution and untimely death of the overcomers brings about a lack of understanding of the word, and the result is that the kingdoms of men remain carnal in their relationships with their fellow nations. The natural result is war, disruption, and upheaval, as territory is taken and lost. Conditions on earth have no resemblance to the peaceful Kingdom of Christ that comes after the close of the Pentecostal Age.

These verses give us a quick look at the long-term results of the little horn’s “*war with the saints*” ([Dan. 7:21](#)) up to the time “*when the saints took possession of the Kingdom*” ([Dan. 7:22](#)).

Hiding in the Mountains

What does John mean when he speaks of men hiding in caves and among the rocks in the mountains? While John does not attempt to interpret this revelation, we know that he drew upon the revelation set forth in [Isaiah 2:19–21](#),

¹⁹ And men will go into caves of the rocks, and into holes of the ground before the terror of the Lord, and before the splendor of His majesty, when He arises to make the earth tremble. ²⁰ In that day men will cast away to the moles and the bats their idols of silver and their idols of gold, which they made for themselves to worship, ²¹ in order to go into the caverns of the rocks and the clefts of the cliffs, before the terror of the Lord and the splendor of His majesty, when He arises to make the earth tremble.

The second chapter of Isaiah, then, provides us with a longer explanation of Revelation 6. Isaiah begins by setting forth *“the mountain of the house of the Lord,”* which was pictured by the temple on a hill in Jerusalem. The problem, of course, was that the temple had become corrupted by the time of Isaiah, so it was no longer an accurate portrayal of the temple in heaven.

But Isaiah speaks prophetically of this “house” in an age to come, when its construction on earth would be completed. Paul describes it in [Eph. 2:19–22](#) as a temple built upon the foundation of Christ, the apostles, and the prophets. To complete this house, made of “*living stones*” ([1 Peter 2:5](#)), one must await the final generation when there are sufficient numbers of those “stones” to be placed in the temple walls. Hence, this prophetic temple was for a future time in Isaiah’s day.

Isaiah then gives an invitation to the “*house of Jacob*” to “*walk in the light of the Lord*” ([Isaiah 2:5](#)). His use of the name Jacob, rather than Israel, shows their deceitfulness and carnality which Jacob himself manifested prior to wrestling with the angel. The prophet further says that God had “*abandoned Thy people, the house of Jacob*” on account of their apostasy (2:6). They were wealthy and strong militarily (2:7), but their land was full of idols (2:8).

Both the common man and the great men had bowed down to these idols (2:9), so God says through the prophet, “*do not forgive them.*” This is where he first says, “*Enter the rock and hide in the dust from the terror of the Lord and from the splendor of His majesty*” (2:10). It is “*a day of reckoning*” (2:12), where God brings judgment against all who have exalted themselves and their false gods above the God of Israel.

God comes “*against all the lofty mountains [nations], against all the hills [lesser nations] that are lifted up*” (2:14), so that “*the Lord alone will be exalted in that day*” (2:17).

This is the background to [Isaiah 2:19–21](#) which we quoted earlier, and which John quotes in [Rev. 6:15–17](#). Isaiah concludes the chapter by identifying the root problem in [Isaiah 2:22](#),

²² Stop regarding man, whose breath of life is in his nostrils; for why should he be esteemed?

In other words, stop following men rather than the God of Israel, and the traditions of men rather than the word of God. To put men and their understanding above God and His word is to worship idols. But when God arises to manifest “*the splendor of His majesty,*” “*the idols will completely vanish*” ([Isaiah 2:18](#)).

This problem of idolatry (and heart idolatry) has prevailed over the centuries and is the reason for the war against the saints. When the time allotted to the little horn ends, then the saints will be given the Kingdom. This is the time when the glory of God is manifested and “*when He arises to make the earth tremble*” ([Isaiah 2:19, 21](#)). This trembling will shake the nations and the heavens too. [Hag. 2:5–7](#) says,

⁵ As for the promise which I made you when you came out of Egypt, My Spirit is abiding in your midst; do not fear! ⁶ For thus says the Lord of hosts, “Once more in a little while, I am going to shake the heavens and the earth, the sea also and the dry land. ⁷ And I will shake all the nations; and they will come with the wealth of all nations; and I will fill this house with glory,” says the Lord of hosts.

Having reviewed Isaiah’s prophecy, let us now return with a greater understanding of John’s words in [Rev. 6:15–17](#). When John tells us that the kings and great men, rich men, slaves and free men will hide themselves in the caves, they are the men who love darkness rather than light. When the light of the glory of God is manifested, those who love darkness will flee.

The Kingdom of Light

When the evil men run to the caves and hide among the rocks in the mountains, they are not fleeing from aerial bombardment. They flee from the light of the word which is the practical extension of the glory of God. Their idols

cannot stand in the light of divine revelation. Hence, they flee, lest their deeds should be exposed. Jesus said in [John 3:19–21](#),

¹⁹ And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil. ²⁰ For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. ²¹ But he who practices the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.

It is plain that the light of the word has been with us since God first said, “*Let there be light.*” But that light has always been opposed by the darkness, spiritually speaking. This describes metaphorically the war against the saints as well, a war which was a continuation of the war that Jerusalem waged against the prophets in the Old Testament.

The legal end of this dispute comes at the appointed time, as Daniel says, with the transfer of authority to the saints of the Most High. The legal end is followed by the practical end of this war, when the manifestation of His glory and majesty arises in the earth. This will not be an instantaneous victory, of course. It speaks of an unknown time during which we will see a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit that manifests in the saints.

John says that those who flee to the mountains and caves say, “*Fall on us and hide us from the presence [prosopon, “face, presence”] of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb [arnion, “little lambs”]*” ([Rev. 6:16](#)). They fled from two entities, who are really one, for it is the glory of God manifesting in His saints that cause them such fear.

This is the topic of Paul’s discussion in [2 Thess. 1:9, 10](#),

⁹ And these will pay the penalty of eternal [aionian] destruction, away from the presence [prosopon, “face”] of the Lord and from the glory of His power, ¹⁰ when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed—for our testimony to you was believed... ¹² in order that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in Him

This event describes more than just a King coming out of heaven to manifest His glory to those who look upon Him. It describes the saints having the glory of God in them. The Greek word *prosopon* is the equivalent of the Hebrew word *panim*, which describes the glory seen in the face of Moses when he was transfigured in [Exodus 34:30](#).

In [2 Cor. 3:13](#), when Paul discussed Moses’ face that glowed with the presence of God, he used the term *prosopon*, “face.” It is the same prophetically-charged word that John used in [Rev. 6:16](#). It does not refer to men fleeing the face of Jesus Himself, but rather the face of God seen in the faces of the glorified saints. Paul says that they will “*be marveled at*” in that day. John says that the lovers of darkness will flee and hide.

Either way, it is a picture of victorious overcoming, as [John 1:5](#) says,

⁵ And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it [katalambano, “to seize, lay hold of, detect, or overcome”].

This has a double meaning. Darkness cannot comprehend light (truth), and darkness cannot overcome or extinguish the light.

So [Rev. 6:17](#) concludes, “*who is able to stand?*” In other words, who can withstand, or stand against, the light and glory in the face of the saints? Paul says in [2 Thess. 2:8](#),

⁸ And then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance [epiphaneia, “brightness”] of His coming [parousia, “presence”].

The “lawless one” will not be able to win this war. While the saints were to be overcome during the time allotted to the little horn, the day comes when the saints are glorified. Then they go forth to conquer, not by physical arms, but by the power of the glory of God. No one then can withstand them, for their “wrath” (i.e., *purposeful passion*) pushes back the darkness until all idolatry ends and the whole earth is filled with His glory.

Chapter 7: The Sealing

The sixth seal, as we have seen, starts with the martyrdom and persecution of the saints and ends with “*the great day of their wrath*” ([Rev. 6:17](#)). This day of “wrath” is pictured as a time when the kings and great men and even slaves run for the hills to hide in caves. John was referencing the second chapter of Isaiah, an end-time prophecy of the emerging victory of the “*mountain of the Lord*.”

It is apparent from this that if we were to place a time frame on the sixth seal, it actually takes us all the way to the time of the end and the establishment of the Kingdom of God. But the seventh seal, with its trumpets and bowls, must also be given time for fulfillment. The sixth seal does not conclude the book of Revelation. Hence, it is clear that while the persecutions of the sixth seal are ongoing in the background, other events are also taking place.

In fact, the great victory of the saints over the kings of the earth, along with the fall of Mystery Babylon, is not fully covered until Revelation 17–19. Hence, John has previewed the coming victory in chapter six, as if to give hope to the persecuted saints during their time of tribulation.

Furthermore, [Dan. 7:21, 22](#) makes it clear that the little horn’s war with the saints continues until the transfer of authority at the end of the beast nations’ dominion. We must therefore conclude that the sixth seal largely runs concurrent with the seventh. There is no strict linear time line that divides the two into distinct historical phases. The sixth seal has more to do with the long-running war (persecution) in which the saints find themselves, while the seventh gives us a more definitive time line of events that focus on the downfall of Babylon.

Chapter 7—Zayin

The seventh chapter of revelation calls for a time-out to seal the saints, in view of the time of persecution when the little horn makes war on them. This is obviously a pause in the narrative, rather than a pause in the time of persecution.

The seventh chapter relates to the seventh letter of the Hebrew alphabet, the *zayin*, which means a weapon of war, a sword. While the carnal kings of the earth depend upon physical weapons to enforce their wills, the saints rely upon spiritual weapons. [2 Cor. 10:3, 4](#) says,

³ For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, ⁴ for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.

In fact, it is precisely on account of these spiritual weapons that the kings of the earth must flee to the mountains and caves, for what carnal weapons can withstand such spiritual weapons? The kings of the earth are allowed to overcome the saints during their allotted time ([Dan. 7:21](#)), but when their legal authority ends, God equips His saints with sufficient spiritual weapons to take back the earth by the manifest power of God Himself.

The Four Angels

[Revelation 7:1](#) says,

¹ After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, so that no wind should blow on the earth or on the sea or on any tree.

The phrase “after this” is not meant to date this event after the fall of kings, but to show that John saw this after seeing the sixth seal being opened. The sealing of the saints is obviously designed to protect, empower, or confirm those who find themselves at war with the little horn. Hence, the sealing would be meaningless if we were to place it after the war had ended in victory. For this reason, the sealing of these saints occurs at or near the start of the sixth seal, rather than at the end of the age as many have assumed.

The four angels represent the earth, each identified with a different direction (north, south, east, and west). These are the same four angels that the prophet saw in [Zech. 6:1–8](#).

¹ Now I lifted up my eyes again and looked, and behold, four chariots were coming forth from between the two mountains; and the mountains were bronze mountains.

The chariots were pulled by four horses of various colors: red, black, white, and “dappled” (spotted).

⁴ Then I spoke and said to the angel who was speaking with me, “What are these, my lord?” ⁵ And the angel answered and said to me, “These are the four spirits [*ruach*, “winds”] of heaven, going forth after standing before the Lord of all the earth.”

The Hebrew word *ruach* means both wind and spirit. The connection between wind and spirit is seen on the day of Pentecost when a great wind blew in the upper room when the Holy Spirit came upon them ([Acts 2:2](#)).

The four spirits of heaven were told in [Zech. 6:7](#), “*Go, patrol the earth.*” They are, then, the earth patrol, a kind of heavenly police. In [Jer. 49:36](#) we find them under orders to bring judgment upon Elam.

³⁶ And I shall bring upon Elam the four winds from the four ends of heaven, and shall scatter them to all these winds; and there will be no nation to which the outcasts of Elam will not go.

[Zech. 2:6](#) makes a similar statement: “*I have dispersed you as the four winds of the heavens.*” Apparently, these four angels are identified with the four winds and four directions in order to portray their ability to scatter people and nations in every direction.

In [Dan. 7:2](#) we find that “*the four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea,*” and out of the sea came the four beast empires that were to rule the earth. We see here that these four angels, acting under orders from heaven, released these four beast empires and empowered them with the dominion mandate, replacing Judah on account of its lawlessness and rebellion. These same four spirits, or angels, have the power to call a time-out in [Rev. 7:1](#) until the saints are sealed. It is good to know that these beast empires are limited by God’s leash.

So John tells us that these angels are “*holding back the four winds of the earth.*” In other words, the four winds of heaven control the four winds of the earth. The contrast shows us that the four winds (spirits) of the earth reside in the four beast empires raised up by the four winds of heaven. The earthly winds are the spirits of those empires, pictured as beasts because their hearts are beastly. A beast’s motive, as Darwin would say, is “survival of the fittest,” or the survival instinct, which is seen clearly in lions, bears, leopards, and in the nameless fourth beast in [Dan. 7:7](#). Such nations “eat” smaller nations in order to satisfy their hunger and grow stronger. They are motivated by self-interest.

These four winds of the earth establish the reason why there were just four main beast empires. Technically, the Greek beast itself was divided into four pieces when Alexander died and was replaced by his four generals. Likewise, the Roman beast was extended by the little horn, whose reign lasted twice as long as the Roman beast itself. If we were to consider each beast to be separate, the list would be quite long; but the number four was prophetically important, so Scripture sets forth just four beast empires.

In the context of [Rev. 7:1](#), the purpose of holding back the four winds applied primarily to the little horn which was to make war against the saints during the time of the sixth seal.

The Sealing Angel

[Revelation 7:2](#), [3](#) says,

² And I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun [east], having the seal of the living God; and he cried out with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the

sea,³ saying, “Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, until we have sealed the bond-servants of our God on their foreheads.”

Seals had more than one use. Scrolls were sealed by wax on which an official seal was imprinted. The seal hid the contents of the document from the eyes of unauthorized people. In that sense, a seal was used to hide information and shows how the revelation of the overcomers was sealed, hidden, or not understood, because these saints were being persecuted and killed for speaking the truth.

But in the context of Revelation 7, we find another meaning that is more akin to the sealing of God’s people in [Ezekiel 9:3–5](#),

³ Then the glory of the God of Israel went up from the cherub on which it had been, to the threshold of the temple. And He called to the man clothed in linen at whose loins was the writing case. ⁴ And the Lord said to him, “Go through the midst of the city, even through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark [tav] on the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations which are being committed in its midst. ⁵ But to the others He said in my hearing, “Go through the city after him and strike; do not let your eye have pity; and do not spare.”

This was Ezekiel’s revelation about the righteous men in Jerusalem being sealed for their protection before the destroying angels came to bring divine judgment upon the city for their lawlessness and rebellion against God. In the next two chapters, the prophet sees the glory of God depart from the temple and move to the Mount of Olives on the east side ([Ezekiel 11:23](#)).

This sealing not only depicted the protection of the righteous, but also ensured that the presence (glory) of God would remain upon them, even though the glory was departing from the temple. In other words, it foreshadows the divine plan to place His Spirit and His glory within a temple made of living stones.

And so Paul tells the Spirit-filled believers in [Eph. 1:13](#), “*you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise.*”

Secondly, these sealed ones enjoy divine protection, although this does not necessarily mean that they are spared from martyrdom. All of the apostles except John were martyred, and the Roman Emperor Domitian tried to execute John by boiling him in oil. According to Tertullian (*Prescription against Heretics*, ch. 36), “the apostle John was first plunged, unhurt, into boiling oil, and thence remitted to his island.” Domitian was horrified when John got out of the vat of boiling oil unharmed. Only after Domitian failed to kill John did he exile the apostle to Patmos—an unusual departure from the usual execution.

Likewise, in Acts 12 we see how James was killed, while Peter was delivered by the angel. It is clear that God delivers some, but others are killed. It appears that some are called to follow Christ’s example in His first coming, while others are called to follow Christ’s example in His second coming. Yet all are sealed by the Holy Spirit.

In Revelation 7 the saints are sealed before the little horn arises to make war against them, but it is plain from [Dan. 7:21](#) and from history itself that a great many of those saints were killed. We only need to read [Foxe’s Book of Martyrs](#) to see this. But this is also implied at the end of the sealing in [Rev. 7:13–17](#), where many saints are seen clothed in white robes, no longer persecuted and no longer suffering from hunger and thirst. It is a heavenly scene.

In ancient times it was common practice for a general to review his troops after a battle. Those who came out unscathed were marked with a cross on their foreheads to indicate that they were divinely protected. This is the symbolism of the man with the inkhorn in [Ezekiel 9:4](#). It is said that he was to place a *tav* on the foreheads of the righteous. The Hebrew letter *tav* was originally written as a cross or “X.” It was only later, during the Babylonian captivity, that the Jews adopted the Aramaic letters used by the Babylonians that is used in the modern Hebrew language.

The seal, then, is the cross of Christ. The *tav* literally means “mark, sign, or signature.” Hence, God put His “mark” upon them and signed His name on their foreheads to identify them as His own. So we read in [Rev. 22:4](#), “*His name shall be on their foreheads.*”

When the presence of God left the earthly temple in the time of Ezekiel and Jeremiah, His presence was placed in a greater temple—the body of Christ. Ezekiel’s sealing foreshadowed the coming of the Spirit in Acts 2, when the historic moment arrived when the transfer of God’s glory to the Living Stones Temple would occur on the day of Pentecost. Many would become martyrs in the centuries since that time, but all retained the promise of God.

Chapter 8: Who are the 144,000?

[Revelation 7:4](#) says,

⁴ And I heard the number of those who were sealed, one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel.

After this, John lists twelve of the tribes of Israel, each contributing 12,000 to the total.

Perhaps the most controversial issue regarding this is whether John was speaking of physical Israelites or members of a tribal unit. There is a difference, because anyone was allowed to join a tribe if he was willing to attach himself to God's covenant ([Isaiah 56:6–8](#)). Likewise, tribal members (including physical Israelites) could be “cut off” and denied citizenship for refusing to repent of various sins. ([Lev. 17:4](#).)

Hence, each tribe of Israel from the beginning included many who were not actually born of the physical seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. No doubt over time their descendants married someone who could trace their genealogy back to one of the original patriarchs, but that is beside the point because they were full members of the tribe before such marriages took place.

The Tribes are First Fruits

The Greek word for “tribe” is *phyle*, pronounced “fulay,” which is a compound word. *Phyo* (“fuo”) means “to puff, to swell up, to produce, bring forth, to beget.” *Phylon* means “a sprout, a leaf.” Hence *phyle* means to grow, to sprout like a leaf from the Wind, or Spirit of God. The word implies that one has been begotten by the Spirit of God.

Hence, a tribe is a group of related people whom God has brought forth by His “wind” or Spirit. It is applied to physical people, yet it recognizes that all tribes originate with God. The word applies equally to those who are begotten of God by His Spirit. One cannot use John's term *phyle* to prove that these twelve tribes must be *physical* descendants of one of the patriarchs.

As we see often in the book of Revelation, topics that are introduced in the earlier chapters find their culmination in the later chapters. So in [Rev. 1:6](#) we read that “*He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father,*” and this reaches its culmination in [Rev. 20:6](#), where the resurrected overcomers “*will be priests of God and of Christ.*”

The souls under the altar in [Rev. 6:9–11](#) await the promise of God, but in [Rev. 20:4](#) they are seen again as they rise from the dead to reign with Christ a thousand years.

In [Rev. 7:2](#) the angel comes with the seal of God to sign His name on their foreheads. In [Rev. 14:1](#) we see the same 144,000 “*having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads.*”

Nowhere is there any indication that these overcomers must be physical descendants of Abraham or from one of the twelve sons of Jacob-Israel. The focus is entirely on their character and upon their faithfulness even unto death. [Rev. 14:4](#) calls them “*first fruits to God and to the Lamb.*” In other words, they are not the only redeemed ones, but are first fruits of a greater harvest.

Paul explains the law of first fruits in [Rom. 11:16](#), “*And if the first-fruit be holy, so also the mass; and if the root be holy, so also the branches*” (The Emphatic Diaglott). When the first fruits were offered to God in the temple three times a year, it sanctified the rest of the harvest. Hence, once the first fruits offering of barley was waved in the temple on the first Sunday after Passover, men could begin to harvest their barley, because the entire crop was thus sanctified.

The 144,000 are these first fruits. They are the first to be raised from the dead in the first resurrection ([Rev. 20:4–6](#)), in order that the rest of creation might be raised and saved as well in the greater harvest.

Revelation 14 shows that there are actually 144,000 pairs (male and female, warriors and singers), a total of 288,000 overcomers. This is patterned after the example of the Kingdom of David, who had 288,000 in his National Guard ([1 Chron. 27:1](#)) and 288 in his choir ([1 Chron. 25:7](#)). We will cover that in detail later at the proper time.

Meanwhile, it is enough to see that John's pattern of 12,000 from each tribe of Israel draws from the earlier pattern established by King David, who was a type of Christ. In order to connect David's kingdom with that of Christ, John sets forth the tribes of Israel, knowing that these include righteous non-Israelites (such as Uriah the Hittite) serving in David's army. (See [2 Sam. 11:6](#).)

The first fruits are followed by "*a great multitude*" in [Rev. 7:9](#), pictured as the harvest that is sanctified by the smaller group. It is clear that the 144,000 do not make up all who are to be "harvested" (i.e., resurrected from the ground). They are only a small sample taken from the field that is the world. They are the first to be presented as the sons of God, and their presentation ensures a greater harvest yet to come.

Is 144,000 a Literal Number?

Whether we speak of 144,000 or 288,000, John does not explain if we are to view the number literally or symbolically. John merely tells us what he has "heard" ([Rev. 7:4](#)). Thus, it is not crucial to know whether the number is literal or not. Personally, I see the number as both literal and symbolic, because most of the stories in Scripture (other than parables) were historical events that should be taken literally. Yet history has as much meaning as parables, and for this reason, the story of Abraham's two wives was not only historical, but also allegorical ([Gal. 4:24](#)). Allegory without history is just a myth or fable.

The fact that Jesus had twelve disciples was meant to portray symbolically that He was establishing the seeds of divine government, for twelve is the number of governmental perfection and authority. We need not deny the historicity of the twelve disciples in order to affirm the symbolism that it portrayed. Both levels can be understood at the same time without any contradiction.

So also with the 144,000—or, as I believe, with the 288,000. These numbers are built upon the more foundational number *twelve*. Hence, those who are raised in the first resurrection in [Rev. 20:6](#) are said to be those who "*reign with Him for a thousand years*." Likewise, the number 144 has to do with resurrection, because the name of Lazarus, whom Jesus raised from the dead, carries a numeric value of 144. So we find Lazarus being raised after four days ([John 11:39](#)). This speaks of the 4,000 years from the time of Abraham.

The Remnant of Grace

The first fruits company is called "*the remnant of grace*" ([Rom. 11:5 KJV](#)). God revealed that in the days of Elijah this remnant numbered only 7,000 at the time ([Rom. 11:4](#)). Was this a literal number? Undoubtedly. Out of millions of Israelites, only 7,000 were actually "*chosen*" ([Rom. 11:7](#)). In other words, one's Israelite genealogy in itself did not make any man "*chosen*." There is no such thing as a "*chosen people*" apart from the remnant of grace, and no one is part of that remnant apart from faith in Jesus Christ.

Yet at the same time, the remnant of grace are not the only ones who will be saved, for they are only the first fruits of a great multitude yet to be presented to God ([Rev. 7:9](#)). In Paul's day the remnant of grace was *supposed to include* the entire church as the remnant of all the tribes of Israel (and Judah). Yet as the church grew, it became obvious that not all believers qualified as part of the remnant of grace, for many of them were induced to return to the slavery of Judaism and were thereby nullifying the grace of God ([Gal. 2:21](#)). Paul tells such people, "*you have fallen from grace*" ([Gal. 5:4](#)).

The remnant of grace is begotten of spiritual seed by the Holy Spirit, which has impregnated them with the gospel in order to bring forth "*Christ in you, the hope of glory*" ([Col. 1:27](#)). Their spiritual mother is the heavenly Jerusalem ([Gal. 4:26](#)), rather than the earthly Jerusalem. Their status as sons of God is based upon the New Covenant, rather than the Old.

This remnant of grace is not based upon the flesh, but upon the spiritual seed. John agrees with this, saying in [John 1:12, 13](#),

¹² But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, ¹³ who were born [begotten] not of blood(line), nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

John clearly believed that the children of God were not begotten in the fleshly way. Flesh begets flesh; spirit begets spirit. “Blood” speaks of natural descent. No one is a son or child of God until he/she has been begotten by the Spirit. In all of John’s writings, we never find him advocating the idea that children born of the flesh to Israelite parents are “chosen” or that they are sons of God. He has much to say about sonship in his first epistle, but he always bases his teaching on one’s *spiritual descent from Christ*, rather than to one’s natural descent from the first Adam or from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob-Israel.

For this reason, I find no reason to believe that John’s record of the 144,000 from each tribe of Israel is to be interpreted to mean that these are physical descendants of one of the patriarchs. Some Bible teachers in the past 150 years have tried to resolve this problem by saying that there will be only 144,000 surviving Jews on earth, and that they will all be converts to Christ. Out of 20 million Jews on earth today, only 144,000 will survive?? That is a survivor rate of less than 1%, which is very unrealistic.

The Flow of John’s Revelation

We must view the sealing of the tribes in the flow of revelation that John is setting forth. It is a natural extension of the sixth seal, which focuses upon the persecution of the saints during the time of tribulation that began when Assyria took Israel captive and later when Babylon took Judah captive.

Yet the persecution of martyrs really began with Abel, whom Cain slew, and this has continued to the present time. It intensified when the little horn declared war on the saints, and this is the main focus of the sixth seal. John then reveals the end of this persecution when the kings and mighty men of the earth flee from the light and glory of Christ’s presence in His saints.

It is in this context that the sealing of the 144,000 is mentioned. It is not to protect 144,000 surviving Jews who have suddenly come to recognize Jesus Christ at the end of the age—as many teach today. It is to protect the saints of God, regardless of their genealogy. Moreso, it is to identify the saints of God who have qualified as first fruits, the remnant of grace, the children of God. The seal of God is not limited to Jews or Israelites, but upon all who are “*sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise*” ([Eph. 1:13](#))—assuming, of course, that they do not later fall from grace.

Paul puts it this way in [Gal. 3:9, 26](#), and [29](#),

⁹ So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer... ²⁶ For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to the promise.

It is clear that being an Israelite (seed of Abraham), insofar as being an heir to the promise is concerned, is not really about genealogy, but about following Abraham’s example of faith. The seal of God is not dependent upon one’s physical descent from Abraham, but upon one’s faith in Jesus Christ. God signs His name on the foreheads of the faithful ones, regardless of their descent from Adam, Abraham, or from one of the patriarchs of Jacob-Israel.

The Tribes

John says that he “*heard the number of those who were sealed*,” and that they numbered 144,000. As for the tribal listing, we find that Dan was omitted but replaced by Levi, which, as the tribe of priests, did not receive any territory as a state within the nation of Israel. Further, Joseph replaces his son Ephraim in the list.

The tribes are not listed by age, nor are they listed by mother. They are arranged in a peculiar order that does not make much historical sense. The question is why John would list the tribes in this way and in this order. Since (as we believe) he spoke by inspiration, there must be a reason.

Let us quote the passage first. [Rev. 7:5](#) says,

⁵ from the tribe of Judah, twelve thousand were sealed, from the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand, from the tribe of Gad twelve thousand,

Judah means “praise, confess, give thanks.”

Reuben means “behold, a son.”

Gad means “a troop, fortune has come.”

⁶ from the tribe of Asher twelve thousand, from the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand, from the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand,

Asher means “happy, blessed.”

Naphtali means “my wrestling, strife.”

Manasseh means “forgetting, one who forgets.”

⁷ from the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand, from the tribe of Levi twelve thousand, from the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand,

Simeon means “hearing/obeying” (being in agreement).

Levi means “joiner, adhesion, unification.”

Issachar means “hired, there is wages/recompense.”

⁷ from the tribe of Zebulon twelve thousand, from the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand, from the tribe of Benjamin twelve thousand were sealed.

Zebulon means “dwelling, habitation.”

Joseph means “He will add, increase.”

Benjamin means “Son of the right hand.”

The peculiar tribal order in these verses, along with the omission of Dan and the insertion of Levi, makes little sense unless there is a deeper prophecy to be understood. When we string these tribes together in the order that John lists them, we see that there is a hidden message for us. It is, in fact, a confession of praise to God, which leads us directly into the praise of the “great multitude” in the next few verses. It is as if we are meant to include this as a Statement of Agreement in their praise to Jesus Christ.

Praise Confession [Judah]:

Behold, a Son, a whole troop whose fortune has come. They are happy and blessed after wrestling and striving, forgetting their past troubles, hearing and obeying, united as one. Their recompense for their labor is to dwell with God, and He will increase and add to them many sons of His right hand.

Hence, in the flow of the narrative about the martyrs, the 144,000 are sealed by the Holy Spirit, not to keep them from being martyred, but to assure them of ultimate victory. The promise to them is that they, as the unified body of Christ, will be recompensed for their labors on earth, for they are marked by God's signature in their foreheads. These are the sons of His right hand, who will reign with Christ in the Tabernacles Age that is to come.

If Levi had not replaced Dan in the list, we would have missed the whole point of the prophecy. John does not couple Simeon and Dan, but links Simeon and Levi, brothers who, in their time, did not honor their father, Jacob, nor did they hear and obey his instructions. Simeon and Levi are linked to the massacre of Shechem in the incident involving Hamor in Genesis 34. Their cruelty and religious zealotry gave Jacob and God Himself a bad name in Canaan ([Gen. 34:30](#)).

Indeed, God's name is continually blasphemed throughout the nations on account of the lawlessness that is practiced among those with this religious spirit ([Rom. 2:24](#); [Isaiah 52:5](#)).

The spirit of Simeon gave rise to Phariseism, which later opposed Jesus. The spirit of Levi was in the priests who also opposed Jesus. Simeon and Levi were united by this cruel religious spirit that was identified in Jacob's last words about them in [Gen. 49:5-7](#),

⁵ Simeon and Levi are brothers; their swords are implements of violence. ⁶ Let my soul not enter into their council; let not my glory be united with their assembly; because in their anger, they slew men, and in their self-will they lamed oxen. ⁷ Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce; and their wrath, for it is cruel ...

But later, in the sealing of the tribes, we are told the true purpose of these tribal names. The overcomers hear and obey, united by their agreement with Jesus Christ and the divine plan. For this reason, Dan, the judge, is omitted, having served his role as judge of both Simeon and Levi. The sealed ones are overcomers, and the cruel religious spirit has been corrected through discipline. Hence, there is no longer any need for judgment upon them, and a true spirit of *unity in Christ has replaced their unity in crime*. Dan is thus omitted.

As for Joseph replacing Ephraim, the two names are closely related. Since Ephraim was the birthright holder, we should view his name as a supplement to Joseph. According to [Gen. 30:24](#), Joseph means "He will add" (another son). Ephraim means "double fruitfulness," which directly refers to the promise of Sonship that is inherent in the name *Joseph*.

So when we string the names together, we see the climax of the thought: "He will increase and add [Joseph] to them many sons of His right hand [Benjamin]." We could just as easily have used the alternate name to read: "He will bring double fruitfulness [Ephraim] in order to raise up many sons of His right hand [Benjamin]. The important thing is that the hidden message in the tribes, as listed in Revelation 7, tells us that the sealed ones are the sons of God.

Chapter 9: The Great Multitude

After the 144,000 were sealed, John saw a great multitude praising God. This is the same multitude that he had seen earlier in [Rev. 5:13](#). He sees the future, where all of creation sing praise to God, after the divine plan is complete. [Rev. 7:9, 10](#) says,

⁹ After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude, which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands; ¹⁰ and they cry out with a loud voice, saying, “Salvation [Yeshua] to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.”

This great multitude is celebrating the feast of Tabernacles, for they are waving palm branches as instructed in [Lev. 23:39, 40](#),

³⁹ On exactly the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the crops of the land, you shall celebrate the feast of the Lord for seven days, with a rest on the first day and a rest on the eighth day. ⁴⁰ Now on the first day [of the feast of Tabernacles] you shall take for yourselves the foliage of beautiful trees, palm branches and boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God for seven days.

It should be noted that when this feast is finally celebrated in its greatest fulfillment, people from *every nation* are seen keeping it in accordance with the prophetic command in [Deut. 16:13–15](#),

¹³ You shall celebrate the Feast of Booths seven days after you have gathered in from your threshing floor and your wine vat, ¹⁴ and you shall rejoice in your feast, you and your son, and your daughter and your male and female servants and the Levite and the stranger [*ger*, “alien, foreigner”] and the orphan and the widow who are in your towns. ¹⁵ Seven days you shall celebrate a feast to the Lord your God in the place which the Lord chooses, because the Lord your God will bless you in all your produce and in all the work of your hands, so that you shall be altogether joyful.

All are commanded to keep the feast, and all rejoice, whether Israelite or non-Israelite. All are blessed together in the ultimate sense when [Rev. 7:9–10](#) is fulfilled. It marks the final success of the call of Abraham to be a blessing to all families of the earth ([Gen. 12:3](#)).

Hence, the blessing of Abraham extends to all nations when all men are “*clothed in white robes*,” which are the “*garments of salvation*” ([Isaiah 61:10](#)). The Hebrew word for “salvation” is *yasha*, or *yeshua*, which is the Hebrew name for Jesus. Whenever Scripture speaks of “salvation,” it is a prophecy of Jesus Christ. Hence, when this great multitude at the ultimate Tabernacles feast cry out, “*Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb*,” they are recognizing Jesus Christ as King.

The Angelic Witness

[Revelation 7:11, 12](#) continues,

¹¹ And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures; and they fell on their faces before the Throne and worshiped God, ¹² saying, “Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen.”

These angels in heaven say “Amen” as a response to the people on earth who declare Christ as King. This is where heaven and earth finally bear witness to the truth in the fullest sense. The Lord’s Prayer is finally seen in the earth,

“Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” ([Matt. 6:10](#)). This is not the first time that John has gotten a glimpse of the end, for the great Amen was seen also in [Rev. 5:14](#).

It is clear, then, that when tribulation is revealed to John, God also shows him its end in order to encourage him and others during their trials. We see this in the revelation of the sixth seal, where the martyrs were compared to unripe figs being cast to the ground. God then reveals their final victory at the end of the age, as the kings of the earth flee from the light and glory of God’s presence in the saints.

Meanwhile, however, during the course of history, the martyrs are pictured as souls under the altar ([Rev. 6:9](#)), who are given white robes (6:11). Even so, they were told that the day of justice would have to wait *“until the number of their fellow servants who were to be killed, even as they had been, should be completed also”* (6:11).

So again in Revelation 7, after sealing the 144,000 during the time of persecution and war against the saints, we are projected to the end of time to see the outcome of the history. [Phil. 1:6](#) says,

⁶ For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

Though Paul applies this personally and individually to the Philippian believers, we see also that from the beginning God created all things “good” and “very good” ([Gen. 1:31](#)). He “*began a good work*” at the beginning, and He “*will perfect it*” until the end, when, once again, His creation will be pronounced “very good.”

The Elder’s Question

[Revelation 7:13](#) says,

¹³ And one of the elders answered, saying to me, “These who are clothed in the white robes, who are they, and from where have they come?” ¹⁴ And I said to him, “My lord, you know.” And he said to me, “These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

It seemed important for one of the elders to ask John, “*from where have they come?*” This again focuses upon the fact that these come “*from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues*” ([Rev. 7:9](#)). Obviously, the elder knew the answer to his own question, for John responds, “*My lord, you know.*” Yes, both John and the elder knew the truth, but it was important to write this down and to emphasize it once again for the benefit of those who want to restrict this great multitude in any way.

The elder then says that these had come out of the great affliction, or tribulation. The metaphor of washing one’s robes in the blood of the Lamb to make them white is a biblical way of expressing the Hebrew concept of purification, or cleansing. [Heb. 9:22](#), [23](#) says,

²² And according to the Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. ²³ Therefore it was necessary for the [earthly] copies of the things in the heavens to be cleansed with these [i.e., physical blood], but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these [i.e., Jesus’ blood].

John uses this metaphor to describe the purpose of tribulation. While many have put a short time frame on this tribulation (usually limiting it to seven years), it is much broader than that. John puts no time limit on this tribulation, because it covers all the martyrs from Abel until the last martyr is killed at the end of the age. Jesus Himself acknowledged Abel as the first martyr in [Matt. 23:35](#), and in the Genesis Book of Psalms, this is reflected in Psalms 2 through 6.

In the broadest application of this time of tribulation, it can be applied to God's sentence upon Adam, when his estate (creation) was sold into slavery on account of his sin. This was the point where the whole earth began to be afflicted, or put into tribulation. Christ came to redeem the whole creation—everything that was sold into slavery—and thus bring an end to the tribulation of creation.

So if we understand “*the great multitude*” in [Rev. 7:9, 10](#) to be the same as “*every created thing*” in [Rev. 5:13](#), then the definition of a martyr reaches its widest possible application. Both groups praise God in the end, and their praise is witnessed by the elders’ “Amen.”

Their Final Position

[Rev. 7:15–17](#) concludes with the final state (or position) of this great multitude, saying,

¹⁵ For this reason [that is, by washing their robes in the blood of the Lamb], they are before the throne of God; and they serve Him day and night [or, continually] in His temple; and He who sits on the throne shall spread His tabernacle over them.

This is not only a reference to the feast of Tabernacles, or Booths (Sukkah), but also to the theme of marriage. In Hebrew thought, this painted a picture of a Husband and wife under a marriage canopy as they consummated their marriage.

This also fulfills the meaning of the name *Immanuel*, “God with us.” It was prophesied in [Isaiah 7:14](#) that a virgin would conceive and bring forth a son named *Immanuel*. [Matt. 1:23](#) quotes this and applies it to Jesus, even though Mary was instructed (1:21) to call His name Jesus. In the end, *Immanuel* (“God with us”) is fulfilled in [Rev. 21:3](#),

³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell [“tabernacle”] among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them.

This comes in the context of the “*new Jerusalem*” being “*a bride adorned for her husband*.” [Revelation 7:16, 17](#) continues,

¹⁶ They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; neither shall the sun beat down on them, nor any heat; ¹⁷ for the Lamb in the center of the throne shall be their Shepherd, and shall guide them to springs of the water of life; and God shall wipe every tear from their eyes.

Again, this is a preview of the Immanuel scene in Revelation 21, where we read in 21:4,

⁴ and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.

It is clear, then, that the vision John had of the great multitude in Revelation 7, like the vision in Revelation 5, spoke of the future when all of creation is to be reconciled to God through the blood of Jesus Christ. Then, when the good work that God began at creation is completed at the end of the age, all tribulation and hardship will cease, and all of creation will be set free ([Rom. 8:21](#)) and will give praise to the rightful Heir of all things sitting on the throne.

Chapter 10: The Half-Hour of Silence

The first four seals in the book of Revelation followed a general time line of history in the first few centuries. The fifth and sixth are different in that each casts an eye toward the future in order to provide comfort for those who are in tribulation.

The fifth seal portrays the martyrs as sacrificial offerings whose “souls” (i.e. *blood*) are under the altar in the temple in heaven, and they are given white robes with a promise of justice in the future.

The sixth seal speaks of the end-time victory of the overcomers when the mighty men of the earth flee before their light and glory.

However, the hope of future justice and victory that is given to them does not negate the fact that each seal must have a beginning point as well. We cannot lose sight of that beginning point without losing our way in the historical sequence of events. The seals are opened in the context of God’s judgment upon the fourth beast (Rome) and its extension, the little horn.

Recall that the original judgment upon Judah and Jerusalem brought this succession of world empires to power. God Himself empowered these empires and authorized them to rule the earth for a time. He did not give a single empire authority for the entire seven times (7 x 360 years), but divided the time in order to be able to judge each empire for its own sin, while still allowing these “beasts” to have dominion for the entire time of judgment.

Rome’s dominion began in 63 B.C. when Pompey took Jerusalem. The western empire fell in 476 A.D. But by this time “New Rome” (Constantinople) had been built as the new capital of the empire on the western shores of the Black Sea. The Roman emperors ruled from New Rome from that time onward, and *old* Rome was important in prophecy mainly because of the presence of the Roman bishop (pope).

During the time of the little horn, which arose in 529 A.D., the emperor in the East and the pope in the West were both important in their own way. Emperor Justinian made “*alterations in times and in law*” ([Dan. 7:25](#)) by giving the Empire a new calendar and a new system of law that was based on Church law, i.e., canon law.

Yet the seven seals preceded the rise of the little horn, because they were designed to bring judgment upon Rome by various calamities and invasions. From a historical standpoint, the seven seals can be dated as follows:

Seal 1: 31 B.C. to 193 A.D.

Seal 2: 193–284 A.D.

Seal 3: 250–300 A.D.

Seal 4: 250–265 A.D.

Seal 5: 303–313 A.D.

Seal 6: 310–395 A.D.

Interim: Half hour (15 years) of silence

Seal 7: 410–476 A.D. (The fall of Imperial Rome)

The fifth seal, where we see the martyred souls under the altar, picture the martyrs beginning with Abel. Yet insofar as its specific application to the history of Rome, it coincides with the ten days (years) of tribulation from 303–313 A.D. This was the time of the Diocletian persecution, which was perhaps the most horrible in all of Roman history. It was so bad that it was noted in the message to the church in Smyrna ([Rev. 2:10](#)), for this persecution fell in the climactic days of the Smyrna era.

The Roman Earthquake

The breaking of the sixth seal opened up the Pergamos era of the church, as the persecutions began to end from 310–313 A.D. As we have already shown, the sixth seal speaks of “*a great earthquake*” ([Rev. 6:12](#)), that is, political and religious upheavals, which were a prelude to the collapse of Rome by the end of the seventh seal.

The time of the sixth seal (310–395 A.D.) specifically applied to Roman history, culminating with the ruin of paganism. Up until 395, paganism technically, though not in open practice, had still been the *constitutional* religion of the senate. But this changed in 395, when Emperor Theodosius banned all pagan animal sacrifices that had continued up to this time among the pagans. He closed all the pagan temples and prohibited pagan rites. Gibbon writes on page 409 of his book, The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,

“The ruin of Paganism, in the age of Theodosius, is perhaps the only example of the total extirpation of any ancient and popular superstition, and may therefore be considered as a singular event in the history of the human mind.”

But in 395 Theodosius died, and, according to his will, the empire was divided between his two sons. Honorius was made Emperor of the West, with its capital in Milan, Italy. Arcadius, being older (age 17 or 18), was made Emperor of the East, with its capital in Constantinople. The empire had been divided in previous times, but it had always been reunited later. This time, however, the division was permanent. Hence, in 395 the great “earthquake” hit the empire politically with its division and religiously with the ruin of paganism.

The glimpse of the future victory of the martyrs and overcomers in the sixth seal has two applications. The broader application, as we have said, begins with Abel and ends with the Age of Tabernacles. But in the narrower context of Roman history, it begins with the Diocletian (pagan) persecution (303–313 A.D.) and ends with the ultimate ruin of paganism in 395.

395 A.D., then, marked the end of the sixth seal and the start of the “*half an hour*” of silence leading to the start of the seventh seal. [Rev. 8:1](#) says,

¹ And when He broke the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.

What is a Prophetic Half Hour?

In biblical prophecy, a day can mean:

1. one literal day of 12 or 24 hours
2. one year (or 360 days in a prophetic year)
3. a 360-year period (a “time”)
4. a thousand years

In the context of Daniel and Revelation, a prophetic “day” or “time” is 360 years. As they reckoned time in those days, there were twelve hours in a day. So one-twelfth of a day (360) is a prophetic “hour” of 30 years. A half hour is 15 years. The time of silence, then, is the 15-year period from 395–410 A.D. between the full collapse of *Pagan* Rome in 395 to the sack of *Christian* Rome in 410. This was also the interim between the sixth and seventh seals bringing judgment upon Rome.

The New Threat

During this time of silence, a new threat to Rome began to develop. From 395–398 Alaric the Goth invaded Greece, but was repulsed. Shortly afterward, he made an incursion into Italy but was again repulsed.

If the people of Rome, including the Christians, had had eyes to see and ears to hear, they would have recognized that God was about to unleash judgment against this “Christian Empire,” for by this time much of the Christian clergy had become as corrupt as the pagan clergy of earlier times. The Christian leaders had resorted to the same persecution of the pagans that the pagans had done to the Christians. This included confiscating (stealing) temples and converting them into Christian churches. Gibbon writes on page 428,

“Honorius excluded all persons who were adverse to the catholic church from holding any office in the state; obstinately rejected the service of all those who dissented from his religion; and rashly disqualified many of his bravest and most skilful officers who adhered to the Pagan worship or who had imbibed the opinions of Arianism.”

On page 249 he says,

“By the imprudent conduct of the ministers of Honorius the republic lost the assistance, and deserved the enmity, of thirty thousand of her bravest soldiers; and the weight of that formidable army, which alone might have determined the event of the war, was transferred from the scale of the Romans into that of the Goths.”

The Church thought that by perpetrating injustice, murder, and robbery against pagans they were doing good in the sight of God. They did not realize that biblical law demands equal justice for all. Further, they thought that if their soldiers were church members in good standing, this would be satisfactory to God. They did not understand that God looks at the heart, and that judgment begins at the house of God.

And so, the Church did not recognize God’s hand of judgment when it finally arrived. They did not repent of their avarice or murder or idolatry. They did not see any need to manifest the character of Jesus in their relationship with non-believers. They saw only a need to defend the Christian Empire from Satan’s hordes. There was no need to repent, for they were *Christians*.

The seventh seal began a final series of judgments upon the Western “leg” of the Roman Empire, including the city of Rome. There are seven trumpets contained within the seventh seal. They begin with the sack of Rome in 410 and end with its final collapse in 476.

Gibbon writes on page 430 of his book, The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,

“During a period of six hundred and nineteen years the seat of empire had never been violated by the presence of a foreign enemy.”

The hour of judgment finally arrived. It was not a judgment upon pagan Rome, for that (final) judgment had already occurred in 395. No, this was a judgment upon *Christian* Imperial Rome for its corruption, idolatry, and greed. Christianity had been turned from a way of life into a religion of empire. The virtues advocated by Jesus Christ held little value to the organized church.

The religion demanded faithfulness to the Church organization and hierarchy, rather than faithfulness to Jesus’ teachings. The religion demanded more power and wealth, rather than the maturity of their character. The people began to worship relics and saints, and superstition soon replaced the true worship of God. Gibbon writes on page 423,

“In the long period of twelve hundred years, which elapsed between the reign of Constantine and the reformation of Luther, the worship of saints and relics corrupted the pure and perfect simplicity of the Christian model.”

It is amazing how ambitious men can so easily trick Christians into accepting their corrupt leadership. It is amazing how quickly men forget Jesus’ example—he who was most *tolerant* of pagans in their genuine ignorance, and who was so *intolerant* of priestly corruption and oppression of the common man.

Chapter 11: The Eight Angels

The half hour of silence in [Rev. 8:1](#) was a 15-year time period from 395–410 A.D. It began with the legal end of pagan sacrifice, the confiscation of the pagan temples, and the division of the empire. It ended 15 years later when Rome was sacked by the troops of Alaric the Goth in 410.

It is also noteworthy that the full prophetic “hour” (30 years) of this time frame extended from 380–410. The Emperor Theodosius actually proclaimed Christianity as the state religion in 380, which was 15 years before he banned paganism itself.

Hence, we see three major events take place within the space of one prophetic “hour.” The first half hour concerned the governmental transition from paganism to Christianity (380–395), while the final half hour (395–410) silently prepared the city to be invaded by foreign troops for the first time in its history. This shocked the church, for Rome’s final conversion to Christianity had given them a sense of invulnerability, much like the Jews had thought of Jerusalem in earlier times. *Pagan Rome* fell from 380–395; *Christian Rome* fell from 410–476.

The six-day sack of Rome marked the start of a series of divine judgments upon the city until it fell permanently (to Odoacer) in 476. Hence, this time frame from 410–476 marks the time of the seven trumpets framed by the seventh seal. Pagans, of course, attributed the fall of Rome to the anger of the gods for closing down their temples. Augustine found it necessary to write his now-famous City of God to refute those pagan claims and to assure Christians that the true City of God was the heavenly Jerusalem, not an earthly city.

Seven Angels, Plus One

[Revelation 8:2–4](#) reads,

² And I saw the seven angels who stand before God; and seven trumpets were given to them. ³ And another angel came and stood at the altar, holding a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. ⁴ And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel’s hand.

John then saw heavenly preparations being made for the start of judgment upon Christian Rome. He saw seven angels standing before God, each having a trumpet. Trumpets signify decrees from the throne being proclaimed to the people. While the seven angels stood in readiness, “*another angel came and stood at the altar.*” We now see that this scene took place in the heavenly temple, which, in ancient times, had been the model (blueprint, pattern) for the construction of the earthly temple ([Heb. 8:5](#)).

The Ark of God in the Most Holy Place was the throne of God, and the golden altar of incense represented the prayers of the saints. The golden altar stood at the door of the Most Holy Place, because it was, in essence, a doorkeeper. To gain access to the throne of God, one was required to offer incense—that is “*the prayers of all the saints.*” We see this in the instructions for the Day of Atonement in [Lev. 16:12, 13](#),

¹² And he shall take a firepan full of coals of fire from upon the altar before the Lord, and two handfuls of finely ground sweet incense, and bring it inside the veil. ¹³ And he shall put the incense on the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of incense may cover the mercy seat that is on the ark of the testimony, lest he die.

The seven angels are probably the same ones that brought the messages to the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3. Each was called “*the angel of*” a particular church, and so they minister in the temple in heaven in the same way that the priests on earth were supposed to minister. Hence, the angels are pictured as ministering in the heavenly temple.

Yet there was an eighth angel, who appeared to act on behalf of the seven. This angel depicts the earlier practice in the Jerusalem temple, where a priest was chosen by lot each morning to burn the incense while the others prepared the morning sacrifice. Recall the story of Zacharias, who was chosen by lot to offer the incense in [Luke 1:8–11](#),

⁸ Now it came about, while he was performing his priestly service before God in the appointed order of his division, ⁹ according to the custom of the priestly office, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. ¹⁰ And the whole multitude of the people were in prayer outside at the hour of the incense offering. ¹¹ And an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense.

The angel told him that he and his wife would have a son, who would minister “*in the spirit and power of Elijah*” ([Luke 1:17](#)). This angel then identified himself as “*Gabriel, who stands in [or “attending”] the presence of God*” ([Luke 1:19](#)). The presence of God was located in the Most Holy Place, and the altar of incense was positioned closest to God’s presence.

So it appears that Gabriel was the eighth angel associated with the golden altar in [Rev. 8:3](#). Whenever a priest was chosen by lot to offer incense in the temple, he was fulfilling the earthly role of Gabriel, who attended the golden altar in the heavenly temple.

Casting Fire on the Earth

[Revelation 8:5](#) says,

⁵ And the angel took the censer; and he filled it with the fire of the altar and threw it to the earth; and there followed peals of thunder and sounds and flashes of lightning and an earthquake.

Such an action was not part of the ritual of the priest on earth who was called to minister in the temple. This was an extraordinary act which depicted divine judgment. Yet it was not without precedent. When God brought judgment upon Jerusalem for its sin, that judgment was decreed first in the temple in heaven. [Ezekiel 10:2](#) says,

² And He spoke to the man clothed in linen and said, “Enter between the whirling wheels under the cherubim, and fill your hands with coals of fire from between the cherubim, and scatter them over the city.” And he entered in My sight.

This “*man clothed in linen*” was no doubt the same angel as John saw in [Rev. 8:3](#), as both are seen doing the same thing, but over different cities. Ezekiel saw divine judgment upon Jerusalem; John saw divine judgment upon Rome. Both were judged for corruption and lawless rebellion and for refusing to conform to the heavenly standard that it claimed to be following.

Recall that this man clothed in linen was given the earlier task of marking the foreheads of the true believers in Jerusalem ([Ezekiel 9:4](#)). In the next chapter he was given the task of scattering coals of fire upon the city. This shows us that the Babylonian armies who destroyed the city and burned the temple to the ground were the human agents of divine destruction. They thought they were destroying the city of their own will, not realizing that they were blindly acting out the will of God.

Likewise, when Alaric the Goth took Rome, it is not likely that he was aware that he was doing on earth what Gabriel had decreed by casting fire to the earth in [Rev. 8:5](#). What is, perhaps, of interest to us is that after the man in linen cast fire upon Jerusalem in [Ezekiel 10:2](#), the glory of God began to depart from the temple just two verses later in [Ezekiel 10:4](#). We may ask, then, if this too happened to the *Christian* city of Rome during the 15-year “silence.”

We should not lose sight of the fact that John the Baptist was God’s prophet who was called to announce the coming of the One who would baptize with fire ([Matt. 3:11](#), [12](#)). John also announced judgment that the “tree” of Jerusalem/Judah would soon be cut down ([Luke 3:9](#)).

After the angel scattered coals from the altar in [Rev. 8:5](#), the result was thunder, lightning, and an earthquake. *Thunder* depicts the voice of God, though usually not intelligible to most people ([2 Sam. 22:14](#); [John 12:29](#)). *Lightning* depicts God's arrows ([Psalm 77:17, 18](#)), and since arrows also depict sons ([Psalm 127:4, 5](#)), God's lightning can represent the sons of God. *Earthquakes*, of course, depict divine judgment, upheavals of all kinds, and the overthrow of political and/or religious institutions.

These judgments are then applied more specifically by the seven other angels who were standing ready to sound their trumpets. Each angel's trumpet signaled a new judgment upon Rome and the Western Roman Empire in general. A summary of these trumpet judgments are as follows:

1. Alaric the Goth (410)
2. Genseric the Vandal (429–460)
3. Attila the Hun (446–453)
4. Odoacer the Teuton (476)

There is an interlude that separates the first four trumpets from the final three. The final three trumpets are also called “woes,” and they depict God's call for Islam to judge the church.

5. The Saracens (612–762)
6. The Seljuk and Ottoman Turks (1063–1453)
7. The Seventh Trumpet is subdivided into Seven Bowls ([Rev. 16](#))

We will study each of these as we proceed.

Chapter 12: The First Trumpet

The seven trumpets send forth commands from the divine court to bring judgment upon the iron beast foretold by Daniel. The first four trumpets overthrow the Western Roman Empire (and Rome itself) from 410–476 A.D. The last three are Islamic “woes” that overthrow the Eastern Roman Empire (and Constantinople, or New Rome) from 612–1453 A.D.

The Elijah Ministry

When [Rev. 8:5](#) describes Gabriel putting coals from the golden altar into the censer and casting fire to the earth, John reveals little but invites us to search the Scriptures to see what this means. From [Ezekiel 10:2](#) we discover that the angel of God decreed destruction upon Jerusalem in a similar manner. Likewise, [Ezekiel 9:4](#) showed how God sealed the saints in Jerusalem before the judgment was decreed, even as John spoke of sealing the 144,000 in Revelation 7 prior to the opening of the seventh seal in Revelation 8.

And so, the latter part of [Rev. 8:5](#) speaks of thunder, lightning, and an earthquake. The thunder and lightning speaks of the voice of God that is heard in the sons of God during that time. The earthquake is the upheaval of Rome. This suggests that God raised up unknown prophets during this time to issue warnings and also to speak the decrees of God into the earth.

These were voices crying in the wilderness, for as we have said, this voice of prophecy was patterned after the Elijah ministry, which prepared the way for the Messiah’s baptism of fire. Broadly speaking, this fiery baptism was designed to purify and cleanse the hearts of men through the action of the Holy Spirit. This was fulfilled at Pentecost and seen clearly in subsequent years in the Acts of the Apostles.

When this same “fire” is cast upon *rebellious nations* (rather than upon individual people), the results are more dramatic. The baptism of the Holy Spirit can bring internal earthquakes upon individuals, but when it comes upon rebellious nations that refuse to repent and to be cleansed, the “earthquake” can be devastating. Here the “fire” is the judgment of the “fiery law” described in [Deut. 33:2 KJV](#).

Both manifestations of “fire” are seen throughout church history at various times. But it is only at the time of the end, when divine judgment has been meted out against the last beast manifestation, when the great stone Kingdom is ready to grow to fill the whole earth ([Dan. 2:35](#)), that the fire cast to the earth will have a more positive effect upon the nations.

Alaric the Goth (410 A.D.)

[Revelation 8:6](#), [7](#) says,

⁶ And the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound them. ⁷ And the first sounded, and there came hail and fire, mixed with blood, and they were thrown to the earth; and a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.

The earth is the Roman Empire, which is the iron “beast” kingdom of Daniel. A beast is a fleshly nation that is “of the earth” and does not conform to the standard of heaven. In other words, it conducts itself by Darwin’s law of tooth and claw and is motivated by the survival instinct. The trumpets are the warnings of war ([Num. 10:9](#)).

Hail is one of God’s weapons of war ([Job 38:22, 23](#)), which “*shall sweep away the refuge of lies*” ([Isaiah 28:17](#)). Hail is Truth, which alone can sweep away the lies of men. Trees are men ([Deut. 20:19](#); [Mark 8:24](#)). Grass also depicts fleshly people, because “*all flesh is grass*” ([Isaiah 40:6](#)), which Peter interprets in the sense of being mortal ([1 Peter 1:23–25](#)).

So when the first angel sounds his trumpet, God sends the hail of Truth and the fire of the Holy Spirit, mixed with blood. If the blood of Christ is rejected, then man's blood is shed in this time of tribulation. We read that a third of the men were judged by the fiery Law. This is how the Bible interprets its own symbolism.

In 410 A.D. Alaric the Goth took the city of Rome and sacked it for six days. His army removed all of the gold, silver, and gems that they could find and even tortured those they suspected of hiding their treasures. Within a week, the great and wealthy city of Rome was reduced to abject poverty. Gibbon writes of this on page 456, saying,

"The awful catastrophe of Rome filled the astonished empire with grief and terror."

This directly affected about a third of the Western Roman Empire. Rome was not the only city that Alaric sacked. He sacked most of Italy. All the "grass" was burned, in that this literally affected everyone. There was much starvation as a result of the divine fire upon the land. The Goths ate what they could and destroyed the rest of the food. Alaric then tried to take Sicily as a stepping stone to Africa, but failed, because his divine mandate as the judge of Rome had ended. Gibbon writes about their attempt to take Sicily on page 459,

"Yet as soon as the first division of the Goths had embarked, a sudden tempest arose, which sunk or scattered many of the transports; their courage was daunted by the terrors of a new element; and the whole design was defeated by the premature death of Alaric, which fixed, after a short illness, the fatal term of his conquests."

In His mercy, God unleashed only the first round of judgments upon the Roman Empire and then stopped it abruptly.

The stunned people tried to find a reason for this divine judgment. The pagans said it was because Rome had forsaken its traditional gods. The Church was put into the odd position of explaining how this might happen to a "Christian" city. This traumatic event occurred just 30 years after the emperor Theodosius made Christianity the state religion in 380 A.D. and 15 years after paganism had been made illegal.

Alaric destroyed the Christian myth that Rome—now a Christian city—was an *eternal city* that God would never allow to be overthrown. The next year (411) Augustine, bishop of Hippo in North Africa, wrote his famous City of God, explaining that Rome was not the New Jerusalem. The "city of God" was a spiritual city. In other words, since Rome was not the New Jerusalem, the sack of Rome was unrelated to the New Jerusalem. Like Jerusalem, Rome too could come under divine judgment—and for the same reasons as stated in Scripture.

While his basic premise was certainly true, the inescapable truth was that God had allowed a third of this Christian Empire to come under divine judgment. This could be explained only by apostasy and sin in the religion itself. This is the clear message of the book of Revelation. Yet the Church did not repent, for it did not know how to repent. The leaders did not understand that they were fulfilling the prophetic types of the Old Testament King Saul, the father of Christian Denominationalism. The problem with Saul was that the people desired to be ruled by men, rather than by God directly ([1 Sam. 8:7](#)). Through the papal claims, the church had rejected the rule of Christ.

The Reason for Divine Judgment

Many have written about the rise of corruption in the Church, particularly beginning in the fourth century. I too have written of this in my book, [Lessons from Church History](#). While studying this, I wondered what the primary factor was (in the sight of God) that brought about the divine judgment. Passages like [Rev. 9:21](#) gives us a clue:

²¹ and they did not repent of their murders nor of their sorceries nor of their immorality nor of their thefts.

These are the outward manifestations of the deeper "heart" of the problem. The Church under Pentecost was the fulfillment of King Saul, the first king of Israel. He was crowned on the day of "wheat harvest" ([1 Sam.12:17](#)), which was the day later called Pentecost. We have written extensively on that topic already in other writings. But this means that Saul was a type of the Church in the Pentecostal Age ("church age").

When we study the story of King Saul, we find that God gave him authority for 40 years. He abused that authority by oppressing the people. He used that authority for his own gain and was willing to kill (David and others) to maintain power. Saul did not rule by love, but by fear. He was supposed to be the *steward* of God's throne, but he usurped it as if it were his own. The result was that he ruled as other men ruled, and so, like King Nebuchadnezzar in [Dan. 4:33](#), he was given the heart of a beast.

After Saul died, David began to rule Israel. David's name means "love." David was a type of overcomer who ruled by divine love after Saul's time of authority came to an end. Meanwhile, David was trained by Saul, for David learned from Saul how NOT to rule. David also learned how to overcome evil with good ([Rom.12:21](#)). He learned also the principle in [Matt. 5:38, 39](#),

³⁸ You have heard it was said, 'an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth,' ³⁹ but I say to you, do not resist him who is evil; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also.

The story of Saul and David are prophecies of the Church and the overcomers and their respective kingdoms. The Church in the first few centuries endured persecution and did not make any attempt to overthrow the Roman government. They followed Jesus' instructions. There were numerous martyrs, people who were willing to die—not only for Jesus Christ, but also for their enemies. They followed Jesus' example, for we read in [Rom. 5:8–10](#) that few men would even die for their friends, but Christ died for the "ungodly" and for His "enemies."

The Roman government was the Christian's "enemy." The Christians knew this, and they were willing to die for the sake of their enemies in order to manifest the love of God to them. And so whenever Christians died, more Romans came to admire them and to convert to Christ. This was how Christianity conquered Rome—by love, not by hatred or vengeance. The price was high, but it was well worth it.

However, as the Church received authority, it lost its first love. Christian zeal was soon turned into fanaticism. They still did not mind being martyrs, but now they saw it only in terms of defending the faith with the sword and dying for Christ in battle against the enemies. No longer were the Christians willing to give their lives for the pagans, heretics, or Jews. In fact, they preferred to oppress or kill the "enemies of Christ," rather than die for them. So they increasingly made life difficult for the pagans, heretics, and Jews to "encourage" them to convert, even as pagan Rome, in earlier times, had tried to do with the Christians.

And so many pagans and other unbelievers did join the Christian religion, but with the wrong motive. They joined out of fear, ambition, or simply to find employment. The Christians presented Christ as a God to be feared, not loved. Pagans had to renounce one religion and join another. When they did so, they joined the religion, but they did not necessarily become members of the body of Christ. It simply brought paganism under the authority of the Church. This was the root of the problem and the primary reason for the divine judgment upon the Christian Empire.

Chapter 13: The Second Trumpet

[Revelation 8:8, 9](#) says,

⁸ And the second angel sounded, and something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea; and a third of the sea became blood; ⁹ and a third of the creatures, which were in the sea and had life, died; and a third of the ships were destroyed.

Whereas the first trumpet focused upon land events, the second focuses upon the sea. John saw “a great mountain” on fire being cast into the sea. Even as the first trumpet described (in symbolic terms) a Gothic invasion of Italy and the sack of Rome, so also the second trumpet describes, in equally symbolic terms, an invasion from the sea.

First, this “great mountain” was not a literal mountain that was picked up and cast into the sea. Neither was it a large meteor coming from the heavens. [Rev. 18:18](#) and [21](#) is similar, where it speaks of “Babylon” burning and being “like a great millstone” being thrown into the sea. This, of course, shows the final end of Mystery Babylon, whereas the second trumpet shows the end of Imperial Rome. The metaphor of a mountain being cast into the sea was used by Jesus also in [Matt. 21:21](#). It was never meant to be taken literally.

In biblical symbolism, a mountain is a kingdom. We see this clearly in [Isaiah 2:2, 3](#) where we read,

² Now it will come about that in the last days the mountain of the house of the Lord will be established as the chief of the mountains and will be raised above the hills; and all the nations will stream to it. ³ And many people will come and say, Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord ...”

The “mountain” established in the last days is later called the “kingdom” of God. It is not a literal mountain, although in earlier times it was certainly symbolized by Mount Zion, a literal mountain (hill) upon which David ruled.

Thus, the second trumpet calls for the overthrow of a kingdom. It has nothing to do with a huge meteor hitting the ocean from outer space, killing a third of marine life. It has rather to do with judgment upon the Roman fleet, as opposed to judgment upon the land-based cities and armies.

We have shown how the Roman Empire was divided between East and West, with the East speaking Greek and the West speaking Latin. However, there was actually a third major division. The Western Roman Empire was divided by the Mediterranean Sea into two parts: Europe and North Africa. Hence, the book of Revelation seems to consider the nation in three parts and not merely two.

The Vandals

The wealth of the seven African provinces was not evenly divided among its people. The territory had huge numbers of slaves as well as serfs who were nearly as bad off as the slaves. These had little or no loyalty to Rome or the governments of their cities. The tremendous wealth was concentrated in the hands of a few wealthy land-owners.

And so when the tribe known as Vandals crossed the sea to conquer North Africa, they found many poverty-stricken people who welcomed them as liberators. H. G. Wells tells us in his [The Outline of History](#), page 484,

“Manifestly the Vandals came in as a positive relief to such a system. They exterminated the great landowners, wiped out all debts to Roman money-lenders, and abolished the last vestiges of military service. The cultivators found themselves better off; the minor officials kept their places; it was not so much a conquest as a liberation from an intolerable deadlock.”

How the Vandals arrived in North Africa is an interesting story in itself. They migrated from northeast Europe into Spain and from there they crossed the strait at Gibraltar into Africa. H. G. Wells says on page 482,

“By 425 or so, the Vandals (whom originally we noted in East Germany) and a portion of the Alani (whom we mentioned in South-east Russia) had traversed Gaul and the Pyrenees, and had amalgamated and settled in the south of Spain.”

Meanwhile, in Rome, Honorius had died in 423, leaving the Western Empire to his six-year-old son, Valentinian III. In reality, his mother, Placidia, reigned for 25 years in the name of her son. Rome’s armies were led by two generals, Aetius and Boniface, who ultimately destroyed each other in competing for power. Rome was vulnerable.

Genseric became the king of the Vandals in 428. Boniface, one of Rome’s generals, rashly proposed to ally with the Vandals in southern Spain, and he sent them an invitation to settle peacefully in North Africa. The Vandals accepted the proposal, and moved into Africa. Under Genseric’s rule, about 80,000 Vandals moved into Africa in 429, and most of the local population offered no resistance to them, not wanting to see the destruction of their country. Boniface soon regretted this alliance and reversed his policy. Gibbon says on page 475 that he beheld ...

“... the ruin which he had occasioned, and whose rapid progress he was unable to check. After the loss of a battle, he retired into Hippo Regius, where he was immediately besieged by an enemy who considered him as the real bulwark of Africa.”

The local population offered no serious resistance to the Vandals. Even Boniface’s troops were Gothic mercenaries from Europe. The Vandals captured the town of Hippo in 431, where, in the third month of the siege, Bishop Augustine died at the age of 76. (Recall that he was the author of City of God, written earlier in 411 A.D.) When the city was burnt, the library was spared, including Augustine’s writings.

After this, the Vandals began their conquest of the Roman fleets in the Mediterranean Sea. They soon took control of the sea from Rome, which is what [Rev. 8:8](#) describes. H. G. Wells summarizes their conquests on page 482,

“And as a result of intrigues between two imperial politicians, the Vandals of the south of Spain, under their king Genseric, embarked en masse for North Africa (429), became masters of Carthage (439), secured the mastery of the sea, raided, captured, and pillaged Rome (455), crossed into Sicily, and set up a kingdom in West Sicily, which endured there a hundred years (up to 534).

Recall that in the first trumpet, Alaric the Goth invaded Italy in a land-based war, but when he attempted to cross the narrow strait into Sicily, a tempest destroyed his ships. Hence, there was no serious judgment upon the Roman fleet in that first trumpet. However, with the advent of the second trumpet, Genseric (or Gaiseric) the Vandal destroyed the Roman fleets. By 455 A.D. they had obtained the mastery of sea and had actually pillaged Rome itself.

The Roman Emperor from 457–461 was Marjorian. He attempted to reform the decaying Roman Empire, but his reign was too short and the empire too far gone. Insofar as the Vandal threat was concerned, he knew, as Gibbon says on page 503, *“it was impossible without a maritime power to achieve the conquest of Africa.”*

And so for three years he built a great fleet of 300 ships, along with other transport vessels, in order to attack Carthage and its Vandal king. But while the fleet lay unguarded in a port of Spain, the Vandals destroyed it. Gibbon says on p. 503,

“Guided by their secret intelligence, he surprised the unguarded fleet in the bay of Carthage; many of the ships were sunk, or taken, or burnt; and the preparations of three years were destroyed in a single day.”

This event in 460 A.D. destroyed the last hope for Rome to defend against Genseric, the Vandal king. And so from his entry into North Africa in 429 to the final destruction of the Roman fleet in 460, we see the judgment of the second trumpet upon the corrupt, decaying empire. The great mountain of Rome, already burning, as it were, by the fire of divine judgment from the first trumpet, saw its final demise in the sea.

From that moment, it was only a matter of time until the Western Roman Empire, Christian in name, but worse than pagan in its immorality and injustice, approached its final end in 476 A.D.

The Donatist Controversy

One of the great symptoms of Church apostasy in those days is shown in the Donatist controversy. During the persecution of the Roman Emperor, Diocletian (in 305 A.D.), the bishops in Africa were ordered to give up their copies of the Scriptures to be burned by the political authorities. Some bishops complied with this order, and their lives were spared. Others, however, resisted and refused, believing it was a terrible sin to comply with this order.

A few years later, the Emperor Constantine ended these persecutions. The “Donatist” controversy then erupted, named after Donatus Magnus, the most important leader of the bishops who had rigorously refused to give up the Scriptures. The Donatists believed that these bishops had denied the faith and should be excluded from the ministry. Others believed their weakness should be forgiven and they should be restored to fellowship. The majority of the mainstream Church ruled *against* the more rigorous Donatists, choosing to show clemency to those who gave up their copies of the Scriptures.

The Donatists were concerned about “holiness” and became somewhat of a Holiness Movement of the day. Its weakness was legalism. The other side was more concerned about grace and forgiveness and became somewhat of a Grace Movement. Its weakness was in overlooking sin in the name of Grace. Both sides had its spiritual men and both had its carnally-minded men. The result of this controversy was that there was a schism in the church between the Orthodox and the Donatist churches.

To his credit, Constantine issued an edict in 321 granting the Donatist churches freedom and toleration. However, in the decades after Constantine’s death, other Christian Emperors, in the name of unity, attempted to force them back into the mainstream “orthodox” church. The Donatists resisted this forced assimilation, taking a hardline, self-righteous position, and many even resorted to violence themselves. There were actually some Donatist monks, “*who wandered about the country among the cottages of the peasantry, carried on plunder, arson, and murder*” (Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church, Vol. 3, page 362).

Nearly a century went by without resolving the differences. Finally, in 411 A.D., shortly after the sack of Rome, and while Augustine was writing his City of God, representatives from the two groups held a three-day conference in Carthage to try to resolve their differences. In attendance were 286 Orthodox bishops and 279 Donatist bishops. The numbers themselves show how divided the Church in North Africa had become.

The conference again failed to resolve the differences, and did not regain “Church unity.” (By this they meant unity of the religion—not unity in the body of Christ, which is the true Church.) And so, more intolerant laws were passed against the Donatists to try to force them to confess the error of their view and bring them back into the fold. Philip Schaff says on p. 364,

“In 415 they were even forbidden to hold religious assemblies, upon pain of death.

“Augustine himself, who had previously consented only to spiritual measures against heretics, now advocated force, to bring them into the fellowship of the church, out of which there was no salvation.”

Augustine's allowance of the use of force was later used to justify the use of force during the Inquisitions, where the church used torture and threats of being burned at the stake to coerce "heretics" into recanting their religious views.

They should have allowed what we call “freedom of conscience.” In my view, it is difficult to decide which side was right, because neither side manifested the character of Christ or the fruit of the spirit. They had long since lost sight of the love of the Prince of Peace. Most of them had forgotten that God’s ultimate purpose is not to establish a religion but to prepare for Himself a body in which to manifest the glory of His character and being.

However, by this time they viewed the church as an earthly organization requiring membership, rather than as a body of people whose names were enrolled in heaven ([Heb. 12:23](#)).

This was the condition of the African church at the time the Vandals arrived. The Church had wasted its opportunity to develop the love of God toward each other. So even though the Vandals were now “the enemy,” no one even thought about showing them the love of God. Thus, instead of the Church looking upon the Vandals as a divine judgment for their spiritual condition, they did not repent. Instead of seeing in this situation an unprecedented missionary opportunity to convert Vandals by love, they reacted in the typical carnal manner like any pagan Roman would have done. Philip Schaff tells us on page 364,

“The conquest of Africa by the Arian Vandals in 428 devastated the African church, and put an end to the controversy ...”

So ended the judgment of the second trumpet.

Chapter 14: The Third Trumpet

So far we have discussed the first two trumpets which brought invasions upon the Western Roman Empire from 410–460 A.D. These trumpets were the word of divine judgment embodied by Alaric the Goth and Genseric the Vandal. God's third judgment upon Rome was Attila the Hun. John speaks of the third trumpet in [Rev. 8:10, 11](#),

¹⁰ And the third trumpet sounded, and a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of waters; ¹¹ and the name of the star is called Wormwood; and a third of the waters became wormwood; and many men died from the waters, because they were made bitter.

This is not to be understood as a literal star, comet, or meteor falling from heaven, which pollutes a third of the rivers on earth. Meteors are not known to pollute streams or rivers. Neither do the waters themselves become wormwood, as a literal interpretation of verse 11 appears to say. It is a symbolic way of saying that a destructive army has fallen upon a third of the rivers (or tributaries) of Roman territory (earth), causing hardship and great bitterness.

Wormwood and Gall

The bitterness of gall and wormwood is mentioned a number of times in the Old Testament and is associated first with men's idolatry and secondly with God's judgment for that idolatry. Wormwood was the bitter water (juice or extract) of gall. Strong's Concordance tells us that gall (*rosh*) is a poppy plant. Hence, wormwood is its juice, which is full of bitter-tasting OPIUM.

[Deuteronomy 32:31, 32](#) says,

³¹ Indeed their rock is not like our Rock, even our enemies themselves judge this. ³² For their vine is from the vine of Sodom, and from the fields of Gomorrah; their grapes are grapes of poison [*rosh*, "poppy"], their clusters, bitter.

In other words, Sodom and Gomorrah were known for their cultivation of poppies and for their drug trade. Not only was the juice bitter, but it also made life bitter for those who partook of Sodom's communion. [Jer. 9:13–15](#) likens this opium to the word of the false prophets in Jerusalem and to the judgment of God as well, saying,

¹³ And the Lord said, "Because they have forsaken My law which I set before them, and have not obeyed My voice nor walked according to it, ¹⁴ but have walked after the stubbornness of their heart and after the Baals, as their fathers taught them, ¹⁵ Therefore thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, "Behold, I will feed them, this people, with wormwood [*lahana*, "opium"] and give them poisoned water [*mayim rosh*, "water of poppy"] to drink.

In other words, divine judgment was to come on account of the lawlessness of the people. Further, the prophets of Jerusalem had comforted the people with false hope. They had "fed" the people spiritual opium to make them feel good about themselves, as [Jer. 8: 10, 11](#) says,

¹⁰ ... From the prophet even to the priest, everyone practices deceit. ¹¹ And they heal the brokenness of the daughter of My people superficially, saying, "Peace, peace," but there is no peace.

The prophet laments further in [Jer. 8:22](#),

²² Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then has not the health of the daughter of My people been restored?

Gilead was known for its balm (essential oil from balsam trees) that had power to heal. The prophet likens it to the true word of God, teaching from the law of God, which had the power to heal the underlying problem in Jerusalem. In this case, Jeremiah had told the people that God had decreed judgment upon Jerusalem, and that they should submit to the king of Babylon ([Jer. 27:6, 9–11, 14, 15](#)). The false prophets contradicted the true word, telling the people that God would save them from all enemies because they were the chosen people.

Most of the people believed the false prophets, thereby drinking their opium, which gave them a sense of peace and well-being, but it did not restore their spiritual health. So because the people refused to submit to the divine judgment, they acted “presumptuously” ([Deut. 17:11, 12](#)). Refusing to submit to God’s judgment results in the death penalty, for it is a treasonous act of open rebellion.

So God says, “*I will feed them, this people, with wormwood*” ([Jer. 9:15](#)). We showed in our book, [The Laws of Wormwood and Dung](#), that when religion becomes full of gall (the “opiate of the people”), God then makes us drink the fruit of our own desires—gall and wormwood. This is the figurative way of depicting judgment that fits the crime.

Rome Given Wormwood and Gall to Drink

In the case of [Rev. 8:10, 11](#), Attila the Hun was God’s way of making the Christian Roman Empire drink the bitter waters of gall from wormwood. For this reason, the “great star” is seen falling “from heaven.” It pictures God giving the Empire wormwood to drink, as [Jer. 9:15](#) had said about Jerusalem many years earlier.

The Christian Empire had violated the divine law by allowing a root of bitterness to defile them, even as Esau ([Heb.12:15–17](#)) and Simon Magus did ([Acts8:23](#)). The Church had become like Esau, who had neither faith nor patience and wanted to take the Kingdom by force and violence, rather than by love and peace. In reading Church history we find that the Church was full of violence against all pagans, Jews, and heretics, attempting to take the Kingdom by force.

The Church had become like Simon Magus, who thought the Holy Spirit’s power and authority (bishoprics) could be purchased with money. The Church fell into the money trap, thinking that if they could just accumulate enough money, they could bring the whole earth into God’s Kingdom. These are the roots of bitterness that defiled them and is the reason for God’s judgment upon the Christian Empire.

Divine judgment fell upon Christian Rome, even as it had fallen upon Israel in earlier centuries. The divine law, commenting upon the idolatry of the Canaanites, warned Israel not to be like them, saying in [Deut. 29:18](#),

¹⁸ lest there shall be among you a man or woman or family or tribe, whose heart turns away today from the Lord our God, to go and serve the gods of those nations, lest there shall be among you a root bearing poisonous fruit [“water of gall”] and wormwood.

The law goes on to tell us that idolatry will bring the judgment of God upon a nation—at least upon those nations that claim the God of the Bible as their God. If they have the Bible, then they are accountable to Him to be obedient to the word.

Attila’s Invasion

Attila the Hun came from the East, first invading the East as far as Constantinople (446). Then he invaded Western Europe in 450 A.D. We read on page 487 of H. G. Wells’ [The Outline of History](#),

“In 451 Attila declared war on the western empire. He invaded Gaul He sacked most of the towns of France as far south as Orleans. Then the Franks and Visigoths and the imperial forces united against him, and a great and obstinate battle at Chalons (451), in which over 150,000 men were killed on both sides, ended in his repulse and saved Europe from a Mongolian overlord.”

While retreating, Attila's cruelty gave him a reputation as "the scourge of God." Gibbon tells us in The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, p. 487–488,

"... it was perhaps in this war that they exercised the cruelties which, about fourscore years afterwards, were revenged by the sons of Clovis. They massacred their hostages, as well as their captives; two hundred young maidens were tortured with exquisite and unrelenting rage; their bodies were torn asunder by wild horses, or their bones were crushed under the weight of rolling wagons; and their unburied limbs were abandoned on the public roads as a prey to dogs and vultures."

Later, on page 489, Gibbon writes,

"It is a saying worthy of the ferocious pride of Attila that the grass never grew on the spot where his horse had trod."

The Bible puts it a little differently in [Deut. 29:22](#), [23](#),

²² Now the generation to come ... when they see the plagues of the land and the diseases with which the Lord has afflicted it, will say, ²³ All its land is brimstone and salt, a burning waste, unsown and unproductive, and no grass grows in it, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah ...

In other words, if God's people reject the law of God and choose instead to drink the wine of Sodom (lawless teachings, claiming peace but practicing violence), then they will suffer the same judgment that came upon Sodom and Gomorrah. They will become spiritually unproductive, and their spiritual landscape will become barren.

H. G. Wells shows that Attila's invasions did not end with the battle at Chalons in 451. He says on page 487,

"This disaster by no means exhausted Attila's resources. He turned his attention southward, and overran North Italy. He burnt Aquileia and Padua, and looted Milan, but he made peace at the entreaty of Pope Leo I. He died in 453"

Gibbon tells us more details of Leo's intercession:

"Leo, bishop of Rome, consented to expose his life for the safety of his flock ... The barbarian monarch listened with favorable, and even respectful, attention; and the deliverance of Italy was purchased by the immense ransom or dowry of the princess Honoria." (The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, p. 491)

Honoria, the daughter of the emperor, Valentinian III, was given to Attila, who added her to the innumerable wives in his harem. Such was the price of peace that Rome paid to "the scourge of God."

Valentinian III himself, after murdering one of his generals, was murdered in turn by the general's followers. Gibbon described Valentinian,

"... though he never deviated into the paths of heresy, he scandalized the pious Christians by his attachment to the profane arts of magic and divination." (p. 496)

In this one brief statement we catch a glimpse into the state of the Church of that time. If the emperor had believed that Jesus was merely *similar* to God, rather than *actually* God, he would have been excommunicated as an Arian heretic. But since he merely murdered his general for no good reason and merely practiced magic and divination, the Church indulged him and tolerated him as an Orthodox Christian. Their creeds were more important than either personal righteousness or human lives. Gibbon concludes his chapter by saying,

“If all the barbarian conquerors had been annihilated in the same hour, their total destruction would not have restored the empire of the West; and if Rome still survived, she survived the loss of freedom, of virtue, and of honour.” (p. 497)

Like Israel of old, the Church forsook the covenant of God. Israel forsook the Old Covenant, while the Church forsook the New Covenant. Thus, we read of the purpose of divine judgment again in [Deut. 29:24–26](#),

²⁴ And all the nations shall say, Why has the Lord done thus to this land? Why this great outburst of anger? ²⁵ Then men shall say, Because they forsook the covenant of the Lord, the God of their fathers, which He made with them when He brought them out of the land of Egypt. ²⁶ And they went and served other gods and worshipped them, gods whom they have not known, and whom He had not allotted to them.

Attila the Hun was only the third trumpet to be blown against the Christian Roman Empire. Each trumpet was another call to repentance, and each time Rome overcame, but became weaker and moved closer to collapse.

Chapter 15: The Fourth Trumpet

When Attila died in 453, his empire crumbled, and the nations he had conquered regained their independence. His third-trumpet judgment was temporary in order to give the Christian Empire a final opportunity to repent. However, they did not repent, for they thought that the invaders were the problem. No doubt they prayed mightily that God would overthrow the foreign armies and establish His Christian empire with peace; but they failed to remove the spiritual causes of divine judgment.

In 476 the last emperor of the West came to power. His name was Romulus Augustulus. It is considered an accident of history that the last emperor would be named after its first emperor, Augustus Caesar, and also the name of one of Rome's original founders, Romulus. Secular history has many such accidents, but if we view the earth from God's perspective (and if we can read sign language), we see that God had uncovered the pagan roots of Rome that the Church had failed to root out by legal decrees. The people viewed Rome as a Christian Empire, but God viewed it as a pagan tree decorated with Christian creeds.

Augustulus was conquered by Odoacer, the king of a medley of Teutonic tribes. After the third invasion, which again subdivided the Western Empire, the formerly unified Roman Empire was divided into three parts, as each of the trumpets suggested. Odoacer established the Ostrogothic Kingdom, which included Italy. Spain had become the Visigothic Kingdom. North Africa had become the Vandal Kingdom. Divine judgment seems to favor three-part divisions, for we see the same in [Rev. 16:19](#), where Babylon “*was split into three parts.*”

Odoacer's Invasion

In 476 Augustulus (in Rome) informed the emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire (in Constantinople) that there were no more emperors in the West. John says in [Rev. 8:12](#),

¹² And the fourth angel sounded, and a third of the sun and a third of the moon and a third of the stars were smitten, so that a third of them might be darkened and the day might not shine for a third of it, and the night in the same way.

Odoacer's invasion directly affected only the Ostrogothic third of what had been the Western Roman Empire. The sun, moon, and stars, are symbolic of leaders in the nation—not only the emperor himself, but also those lesser authorities under him. In the case of Rome, this would include the senators. Gibbon says on page 504–506,

“Odoacer was the first barbarian who reigned in Italy, over a people who had once asserted their just superiority above the rest of mankind... Odoacer devolved on the Roman magistrates the odious and oppressive task of collecting the public revenue

“In the division and the decline of the empire, the tributary harvests of Egypt and Africa were withdrawn; the numbers of the inhabitants continually diminished with the means of subsistence; and the country was exhausted by the irretrievable losses of war, famine, and pestilence... and the senators, who might support with patience the ruin of their country, bewailed their private loss of wealth and luxury. One third of those ample estates, to which the ruin of Italy is originally imputed, was extorted for the use of the conquerors.”

One-third of these senatorial landowners saw their property “extorted for the use of the conquerors.” John tells us that by the time of the fourth trumpet, a third of the sun, moon, and stars had been blotted out. This is symbolic of the ruling senatorial families of Rome. Hence, John's prophecy has nothing to do with the literal stars being destroyed in the heavens, or the sun being reduced in size by a third, or a third of the moon being eaten away by some sort of cosmic disaster.

It has rather to do with the destruction of the ruling families of the Western Roman Empire. The conquest by Odoacer in 476 is the generally accepted date of Rome's final dissolution. It is possible, though not provable, that the population

of the Western Roman Empire had been reduced as well by a third, because of the wars, famine, and pestilence of that century alone—the time of the first four trumpets. Gibbon writes on page 506,

“St. Ambrose has deplored the ruin of a populous district, which had been once adorned with the flourishing cities of Bologna, Modena, Rhegium, and Placentia. Pope Gelasius was a subject of Odoacer; and he affirms with strong exaggeration, that in Aemilia, Tuscany, and the adjacent provinces, the human species was almost extirpated.”

In the following century, an eighteen-year war with the Goths completed the destruction of Italy. By the time the war ended in 553, Rome’s population had been reduced from a million to a mere 40,000 with half of them supported by papal alms. Milan had been destroyed with its entire population. Farms were abandoned, and in the region of Picenum alone, 50,000 died of starvation. Will Durant tells us in The Age of Faith, page 111,

“The aristocracy was shattered; so many of its members had been slain in battle, pillage, or flight that too few survived to continue the Senate of Rome; after 579 we hear of it no more.”

It was only natural, then, that the bishop of Rome would assume power. He was the only one who could keep any kind of order as anarchy reigned in Italy. Durant says on page 94,

“Amid this chaos education barely survived. By 600 literacy had become a luxury of the clergy. Science was almost extinct.”

The Dissolution of Empire

From the sack of Rome in 410 until the final collapse of Rome in 476, instability, chaos, and the breakdown of law and order became increasingly normalized. Having been stripped of wealth, there was no money to repair the public buildings or the famous Roman roads. More and more, the large landowners ignored governmental decrees. The emperors themselves abandoned Rome and lived in Ravenna, which was more defensible.

Highway robbers became commonplace, where for centuries Rome had been known for making its roads safe. Even the emperors’ guardians of the highways and customs guards (the *curiosi*) began to demand bribes from travelers fleeing to safer places. Soon illegal brotherhoods formed the beginnings of crime families as the precursors to the Mafia.

Human trafficking, slavery, and kidnappings increased exponentially. To protect their children, many large landowners began to send their children to the mountains to be raised secretly by shepherds, only to find that they could not retrieve them later. Appeals to the official law enforcement agencies were fruitless, as they were powerless, underpaid, and often used their position to extort the people.

When people lose confidence in the law-enforcement capability of government, or when government officials become part of the problem, then a culture begins to die. When government cannot or does not maintain law and order, then individuals are tasked with their own defense, and they lose leisure time that is necessary to maintain culture.

Small landowners in Italy found themselves unable to defend themselves, for they lacked the wealth to hire guards. Their children became easy prey to human traffickers. Many great landlords began to act as *redemptores*, redeemers of Roman citizens that had been seized in raids. Since most could not pay the large ransoms, the landlords paid the ransoms on condition that they serve the landlord for the rest of their lives.

This was the beginning of the Feudal System, where serfs were hardly better than outright slaves to landowners (the Nobility).

Classical culture itself was in danger of being lost entirely. Not only were libraries neglected, but education itself became a luxury that only a few could afford. Countless books were burned or lost in the decay of Roman civilization. Many books, of course, remained in the East, but they were soon rare in the West.

The Power Vacuum

The fall of the Western Empire provided a vacuum that was naturally filled by the bishop of Rome. With the loss of civil power, people naturally turned to the church for leadership and hope. Gradually, the bishops increased their claims to power, especially as the barbarian conquerors became Christians.

Although in 411 Augustine's City of God had defined the Kingdom of God as a *spiritual* city, it did not require a giant leap to apply this politically once again to a very temporal kingdom, where men ruled others. The only difference was that instead of using the title of "king," they used the religious titles of "Bishop of Rome" and "Pope." H. G. Wells says on page 526,

"In later years these ideas developed into a definite political theory and policy. As the barbarian races settled and became Christian, the Pope began to claim an overlordship of their kings. In a few centuries the Pope had become in theory, and to a certain extent in practice, the high priest, censor, judge, and divine monarch of Christendom... For more than a thousand years this idea of the unity of Christendom ... dominated Europe. The history of Europe from the fifth century onward to the fifteenth is very largely the history of the failure of this great idea of a divine world government to realize itself in practice."

In fact, the Church's failure to realize its dream of a "divine world government" was because God had declared the three "woes" to judge the Church. These are bound up in the new religion that arose during this time—Islam—whose divine purpose was to bring judgment upon the Christian Empire and the church itself. Understanding God's purpose for Islam is one of the keys to understand the purpose of God even in our own time.

The Causes of Divine Judgment

Insofar as the book of Revelation is concerned—and therefore, God's perspective—the Islamic judgment on the Church came immediately after the Roman bishop laid exclusive claim to the title of "Universal Bishop." This was done by Pope Boniface III in 606. This is quite remarkable, since a recent predecessor, Gregory I (590–604) had insisted that the Church was headed equally by the bishops of Alexandria, Constantinople, and Rome. In fact, in 596 Gregory wrote a letter that declared, "*whosoever calls himself universal priest or desires to be called so, was the forerunner of Antichrist.*" (See Philip Schaff's History of the Christian Church, Vol. 4, page 220.)

Schaff says of Boniface III on page 230,

"Boniface III (606–607) did not scruple to assume the title of 'universal bishop,' against which Gregory, in proud humility, had so indignantly protested as a blasphemous antichristian assumption."

And so the year 606 A.D. marked an important turning point in the history of the Church. It marks the time when the Roman Bishop assumed full authority over the entire Church. Victor had tried to assume this title as early as 192 A.D., but he had been rebuked by Irenaeus and had to give up the title. But 414 years later in 606 Boniface III took the title and held it. All of his successors assumed the title after him.

In my book, [Lessons from Church History, Vol. III, chapter 15](#), I wrote:

I find it very significant that from 192 to 606 A.D. is precisely 414 years, a prophetic time cycle known as Cursed Time. (See my book, [Secrets of Time](#).)

This 414-year time frame saw the rise of the "Little Horn" of Daniel's prophecy ([Dan. 7:8](#)), having the mouth "speaking great things," which John describes as "blasphemy" ([Rev. 13:6](#)). Perhaps Pope Gregory understood this, but if so, his

view was buried in the cemetery of history. From a biblical perspective, this assumption of power was “antichrist,” in that it usurped the position of Christ. I think that H. G. Wells said it best on page 650 of his Outline of History:

“But it is the universal weakness of mankind that what we are given to administer we presently imagine we own.”

King Saul was given a throne to administer under God, but in his rebellion against God, he soon imagined that he owned the throne. So it was with the Bishopric of Rome.

Three years after Boniface III fully usurped power over the Church as an antichrist, God called Mohammed to bring judgment upon the Church. Mohammed then began to preach publicly a few years later in 612 A.D. And we are still feeling the effects of that judgment today.

The last three trumpets, called the three woes, properly begin with the rise of Mohammed and the religion of Islam. Their calling was to judge the unrepentant and idolatrous Church. This is the story written in symbolic language.

Interlude to the Three Woes (Trumpets 5–7)

With the final disintegration of the Western Roman Empire in 476, [Rev. 8:13](#) provides us with an interlude, as if to draw a distinction between the first four trumpets and the final three, which he calls “woes.” John writes,

¹³ And I looked, and I heard an eagle flying in midheaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to those who dwell on the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!

The implication is that the judgments of God might have ceased at this point, if the Church had repented of its sin. But the Church valued creeds instead of character. They thought that the most important Christian value was to pinpoint the precise nature of Christ and His relationship with God, using the precise wording in the creed. In their willingness to excommunicate anyone who had even a slightly different view, to force them to comply, and even kill them as heretics, they showed that they did not really understand the mind of God at all.

The Church worshiped its image (carnal understanding) of God, rather than God Himself. God was viewed through the eyes of their literary artists, who painted His portrait with great precision, but used a carnal model. They were quick to shed the blood of heretics and dissenters, but appointed and tolerated many ambitious and greedy bishops who acted nothing like Jesus Christ.

The Church had long ago lost its first love. It was no longer a simple way of life that focused upon manifesting the love of God in the way that Jesus did. It was now a full-blown religious empire that ruled over the minds and bodies of men and treated parishioners as subjects.

During this interlude from 476 to 606 A.D., the prophetic events inscribed symbolically in the book of Revelation begin to shift from West to East, that is, from Rome to Constantinople. The first four trumpets brought judgment upon the West; the final three trumpets (called “Woes”) bring judgment upon the remaining Eastern Empire.

Chapter 16: Saint Patrick Saves Civilization

Rome had virtually abandoned Britain in 410 when its troops were needed to defend Rome against Alaric the Goth. Britain was left undefended, and this gave rise to Irish raiders, who excelled in the slave trade. They were very good at silently snatching children from their beds at night and sailing back to Ireland before the parents knew what had happened.

Patricius, or Patrick, was a middle-class boy in Britain. His grandfather had been a Catholic priest. At the age of sixteen, Patrick was taken captive to the district of Antrim in Ireland and sold to a local king named Miliucc. He was enslaved for six years, working as a shepherd boy. The Irish at that time were not Christians, and most were illiterate.

During those difficult six years of slavery as a shepherd boy, Patrick had much time to pray and to develop his relationship with God. Then, while sleeping one night in the hills, a voice came to him, saying, “Your hungers are rewarded. You are going home.” He awoke with a start, and the voice then continued, “Look, your ship is ready.”

He was inland from the sea, but he began to walk, not knowing where he was going, until he reached the southwestern part of the island. There he saw his ship. The captain at first refused to take him, because he had no money, but later changed his mind. The ship sailed to Gaul (now France), where they found only devastation, and they walked for two weeks trying to find a single soul who might sell them some food.

This was about the year 407 A.D., the year that the Germans had crossed the Rhine, wreaking havoc on Gaul before moving south to sack Rome in 410. The captain finally challenged Patrick that if his God was so powerful, why couldn’t he pray for some food. Patrick replied, “From the bottom of your heart, turn trustingly to the Lord my God, for nothing is impossible to Him. And today He will send you food for your journey until you are filled, for He has an abundance everywhere.”

The crew awkwardly closed their eyes and had a moment of silent prayer. Suddenly, the sound of a stampede was heard, and a herd of pigs came running down the road toward them. They were soon feasting on the pigs sent by God from out of His abundance!

From there Patrick was able to return to his parents’ home in Britain. No longer a teenager, his hard experience and his time with God had matured him.

Patrick’s Calling

One night, while in his parents’ house, he had a vision of an Irishman that he had known in Ireland. His name was Victorinus, and he was holding a huge stack of letters. He handed one of them to Patrick, and it had a heading: *Vox Hiberionicum*, “The Voice of the Irish.” He then heard a multitude saying, “We beg you to come and walk among us once more.” This was similar to Paul’s Macedonian call in [Acts 16:9, 10](#),

⁹ And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; a certain man of Macedonia was standing and appealing to him, and saying, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” ¹⁰ And when he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

Patrick was not as quick to respond to the call as Paul was. But his visions continued, and finally Christ began to speak more directly to him from within: “He who gave His life for you, He it is who speaks within you.” So he returned to Gaul and joined a monastery on an island to receive a more formal Christian education and eventually became a missionary to Ireland. At about the age of 47, he was the first missionary to the “barbarians,” those outside of the sphere of Roman law. It was around the year 430–432, about the time that the Vandals had conquered Carthage in North Africa. (Augustine had died there in 430 during the siege.)

Patrick was very successful in his missionary work, and thousands came to Christ as the result of his efforts. However, he had a problem with raiders from the slave trade. With the Roman troops gone from Britain, many petty kings arose to carve out new territories and to conduct raids to gain more slaves. One of these, Coroticus, raided the peaceful northern coast of Ireland and carried off thousands of Patrick's converts to Christ. Patrick sent a delegation of priests to Coroticus, but he only laughed at them. To him, the Irish were "barbarians," which at that time was a term comparable to "savages" in later centuries. They were hardly capable of being *real* Christians, for Christianity and Roman civilization were firmly linked in the minds of the people.

Patrick then wrote an appeal to the British churches and to the Christians themselves. In so doing, he became the first in history to speak out clearly against the practice of slavery.

Creating Centers of Literacy

Patrick devoted the last thirty years of his life to his missionary work in Ireland. He died around 461 A.D., while the Western Roman Empire was in chaos and nearing its final collapse. During his years of ministry, Patrick realized that in order for Christianity to survive long-term, the people had to become literate.

Likewise, because they had no martyrs to honor, they found meaning in a different type of martyrdom. Instead of "Red Martyrs," whose blood had been spilled in the Roman Empire, they created "Green Martyrs." These were men and women who left tribal jurisdictions and retreated to the forests or to a mountaintop or to a lonely island to study the Scriptures and to commune with God. Such was the case during Patrick's life time.

But this separatist movement did not last, due to the Irish innate need for sociability and through the efforts of another priest-monk named Columcille, "the dove," who arose in the next century.

"In the early days, soon after the time of Patrick, the anarchistic anchorites [He is comparing these Irish monks to the earlier monks in the Egyptian desert, who were called anchorites.] sought out rocky islands for their hermitages, places like Inis Murray and Skellig Michael off the western coast. 'It is hard to believe,' wrote Kenneth Clark, 'that for quite a long time—almost a hundred years—western Christianity survived by clinging to places like Skellig Michael, a pinnacle of rock eighteen miles from the Irish coast, rising seven hundred feet out of the sea.' (The hundred years of which he speaks stretch from the late fifth century, after Patrick's death, to the late sixth century, by which time, as we shall see, the Irish monks had reconnected barbarized Europe to the traditions of Christian literacy.)

"The power of the druids, who had lived and worshiped in sacred groves, had been easily handed over to the Green Martyrs, who also lived and worshiped in sacred groves. But the access of the new, literate druids (the monastic successors of the Green Martyrs) to the books of the Greco-Roman library—that is, to the whole of the classical sciences and the wisdom of the ancients—gradually created new centers of knowledge and wealth such as Ireland had never known." (How the Irish Saved Civilization, Thomas Cahill, pp. 171, 172)

The "Green" movement evolved into monastic colonies, which became the centers of learning, art, and prosperity. Messengers were sent throughout Europe to find books of every kind, including the Roman and Greek classics.

At the same time, a huge influx of monks fled from Gaul to Ireland as Roman civilization broke down and gave way to the warlords of the Goths.

"After Patrick, they [the Irish] experienced an influx of anchorites and monks fleeing before the barbarian hordes, and these no doubt provided them with some finer points on eremitical and conventual life. 'All the learned men on this side of the sea,' claims a note in a Leyden manuscript of the time, 'took flight for transmarine places like Ireland, bringing about a great increase of learning'—and, doubtlessly, a spectacular increase in the number of books—to the inhabitants of those regions" (Cahill, p. 180).

It was not long before thousands of hopeful students flocked to these learning centers in hopes of receiving an education. They were taught the Scriptures and also learned to read and write. Not being influenced by Roman Christianity, they were unconcerned about the church creeds set by church councils which had divided the Christians of the Empire. It never entered their minds to persecute or execute people for “heresy.” Thomas Cahill writes,

“Irish generosity extended not only to a variety of people but to a variety of ideas. As unconcerned about orthodoxy of thought as they were about uniformity of monastic practice, they brought into their libraries everything they could lay their hands on. They were resolved to shut out nothing. Not for them the scruples of Saint Jerome, who feared he might burn in hell for reading Cicero. Once they had learned to read the Gospels and the other books of the Holy Bible, the lives of the martyrs and ascetics, and the sermons and commentaries of the fathers of the church, they began to devour all of the old Greek and Latin pagan literature that came their way. In their unrestrained catholicity, they shocked the conventional churchmen, who had been trained to value Christian literature principally and give a wide berth to the dubious morality of the pagan classics

“It was not that the Irish were uncritical, just that they saw no value in self-imposed censorship” (Cahill, pp. 138, 139).

This new-found desire to read and write quickly created a huge need for more books to read—and to copy.

“Like the Jews before them, the Irish enshrined literacy as their central religious act” (Cahill, p. 163).

“Ireland, at peace and furiously copying, thus stood in the position of becoming Europe’s publisher. But the pagan Saxon settlements of southern England had cut Ireland off from easy commerce with the continent. While Rome and its ancient empire faded from memory and a new, illiterate Europe rose on its ruins, a vibrant, literary culture was blooming in secret along its Celtic fringe” (Cahill, p. 183).

The Light Shining in the Dark Ages

The collapse of the Western Empire was far more than a change of rulers, laws and political structure. It was a complete disintegration of education and learning, by which Roman culture had been passed down from generation to generation.

“All the great continental libraries had vanished; even memory of them had been erased from the minds of those who lived in the emerging feudal societies of medieval Europe By the end of the fifth century, at any rate, the profession of copyist had pretty much disappeared” (Cahill, p. 181, 182).

Yet during this time, education in Ireland was just beginning, and like a newborn baby, it was growing by leaps and bounds. It was inevitable, then, that the Green Martyrs, who had grown up into educated monks, would finally feel the need to send out missionaries to Europe. These became known as the White Martyrs, sailing into the white morning sky into the unknown, never to return. Such was the dream of Columcille, the spiritual successor to Patrick.

Already, there were foreign students in the monasteries. Many of them returned to their native countries to spread the Gospel. But Irish monks themselves began to set up colonies in “barbarized Europe.”

“More than half of all our biblical commentaries between 650 and 850 were written by Irishmen... and there are traces of the White Martyrs as far as Kiev” (Cahill, p. 195).

When Columcille died, his spiritual heir, Aidan, continued this missionary legacy. Columbanus, who was born about 540 A.D., departed in 590 for Gaul with a dozen companions. He founded monasteries among the Sueves tribes, bypassing the old Roman churchmen who remained behind their walls with no thought of bringing the Gospel to the “barbarians.” Later, he founded a monastery in northern Italy to bring the Gospel to the Lombards.

In other words, *this Irishman was a missionary to Italy*, which at one time had been the heart of the Western Roman Empire. His monks, along with many others and in succeeding centuries, continued copying books in many languages, preserving the culture of Rome.

“The Hebrew Bible would have been saved without them, transmitted to our time by scattered communities of Jews. The Greek Bible, the Greek commentaries, and much of the literature of ancient Greece were well preserved at Byzantium [Constantinople], and might be still available to us somewhere—if we had the interest to seek them out. But Latin literature would almost surely have been lost without the Irish, and illiterate Europe would hardly have developed its great national literatures without the example of Irish, the first vernacular literature to be written down. Beyond that, there would have perished in the west not only literacy but all the habits of mind that encourage thought. And when Islam began its medieval expansion, it would have encountered scant resistance to its plans—just scattered tribes of animists, ready for a new identity” (Cahill, pp. 193, 194).

We see, then, how God used the Irish missionary monks not only to preserve Christian culture, but also to give Europe a Christian identity that could withstand Islamic religious conquest that began with Mohammed in 612. It would not be until 1453, when the Islamic Turks took Constantinople, and the remnants of the Eastern Roman Empire collapsed, that we would see a comparable influx of learning into Europe proper.

The fall of Constantinople in 1453 brought thousands of Greek scholars, carrying their Greek manuscripts of the New Testament, into Europe. Up to that time, only the Latin Vulgate was used. These Greek manuscripts arrived at the same time the printing press began to be used (1452). New translations were made directly from Greek. The Gospel surged in a way not seen since the Irish saved civilization.

Thomas Cahill closes his book with this conclusion:

“By this point, the transmission of European civilization was assured. Wherever they went, the Irish brought with them their books, many unseen in Europe for centuries and tied to their waists as signs of triumph, just as Irish heroes had once tied to their waists their enemies’ heads. Wherever they went, they brought their love of learning and their skills in bookmaking. In the bays and valleys of their exile, they reestablished literacy and breathed new life into the exhausted literary culture of Europe.

“And that is how the Irish saved civilization” (Cahill, pp. 195, 196).

Chapter 17: The Star Falling from Heaven

After the first four angels sounded their trumpets, [Rev. 8:13](#) says,

¹³ And I looked, and I heard an eagle flying in midheaven, saying with a loud voice, “Woe, woe, woe, to those who dwell on the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!”

The first four trumpets were designed to bring about the fall of Rome and the Western Roman Empire in 476 A.D. The final three trumpets were blown to judge Constantinople until its fall in 1453. These are called *woes*, because these judgments are directed as much at the church as at the Roman empire.

In 380 Roman Emperor Theodosius made Christianity the official religion of the empire, and in 395 paganism was outlawed completely. Later, in 534 A.D., Emperor Justinian completed this process by adopting church law as the law of the empire, in fulfillment of the prophecy in [Dan. 7:25](#). The state—represented by the emperor—inadvertently became the mere enforcer of church law and therefore became the servant of the church. After all, the church had created the laws for the empire to enforce.

For this reason, the final three trumpets, or “woes,” directed divine judgment upon both church and state. [Rev. 9:1](#) says,

¹ And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth; and the key of the bottomless pit was given to him. ² And he opened the bottomless pit; and smoke went up out of the pit, like the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke of the pit. ³ And out of the smoke came forth locusts upon the earth; and power was given them, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

Here we read plainly that the fifth angel was assigned by God to open the bottomless pit, or the abyss. From the start it is established in Scripture that the woes are divine judgments upon the church, and that last verse of the chapter says that the church nonetheless refused to repent. These woes were designed to put pressure upon the church and the Christian empire and to expose its sin of idolatry, murder, sorcery, immorality, and theft ([Rev. 9:20, 21](#)).

The earthly manifestation of the three woes has mostly to do with the rise of Islam. Since that time, Islam has been the whip in God’s hand to judge the church—and the empire with it. The problem is that too many in the church thought that Islam was a movement which they were called to fight and destroy, not seeing that they could not succeed in fighting what God had ordained, apart from repentance.

The Universal Bishop

The rise of the little horn after 476 A.D. came to full bloom in 606 when Pope Boniface III claimed exclusive right to the title, “Universal Bishop.” This he did just a few years after his predecessor (Pope Gregory) had stated strongly that this was a “*blasphemous antichristian assumption*.”

In making such a statement, Pope Gregory identified the Papacy itself as the little horn of Daniel. [Dan. 7:8, 20](#) says that this little horn spoke “*great boasts*.” But [Rev. 13:5](#) paraphrases this and interprets it as “*arrogant words and blasphemies*.”

Furthermore, Pope Gregory even identified the Papacy as “antichrist,” if any Roman Bishop were to lay claim to the title of “Universal Bishop.” As we saw previously, the word *antichrist* means “in place of Christ.” In other words, the Vicar of Christ. A Vicar (or “antichrist”) can either rule as a steward or as a usurper. Which role a ruler takes is determined by the manner of his rule. Pope Gregory, then, claimed that any pope who would assume the title of Universal Bishop was no longer a steward but a usurper of Christ’s throne.

Those who teach the futurist view of Revelation think that the little horn is the antichrist, who will rule a revived Roman Empire. They are largely correct, but they are wrong in placing this into the future. They simply do not know history, and so do not realize how this has already come to pass. [1 John 2:18](#) says there are “*many antichrists*,” of course, so by no means was the “Universal Bishop” of Rome the only antichrist.

There have been many Protestant antichrists, Evangelical antichrists, and even Pentecostal antichrists in history, and many are in that position to this day. One only has to look at the prophetic examples of King Saul and Absalom to understand how antichrists usurp the throne for themselves. Saul, who had a legitimate anointing, usurped authority by doing his own will. Absalom was not called to rule, but he actually usurped the throne of his father David with the support of the majority of the people of Israel ([2 Sam. 15:13](#)).

The church is “Saul,” which had a genuine anointing at the start. The misuse of church authority, which was the sin of King Saul, is what gave rise to Islam insofar as God was concerned. Mohammed actually began to get his revelations just after 606 A.D. when Pope Boniface III claimed the title of “Universal Bishop.” Mohammed then began to preach his message in 612.

The Traditions of Men

When the emperor Justinian established church law as the law of the empire in 534 B.C., the new laws were no doubt an improvement upon the previous laws that the empire had accumulated over 1200 years of its history. However, he did not adopt Scripture itself as the law of the land. Instead, he adopted laws that seemed right to him and to church officials who were largely ignorant of the divine law.

Hence, they wrote their laws with their best understanding, but in the end—as the Jews themselves had done—they put away the divine law in favor of their own traditions. They became legalistic, instead of being lawful. [Matt. 15:3, 7–9](#) said to the scribes and Pharisees,

³ And He answered and said to them, “And why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? ... ⁷ You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, ⁸ ‘This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far away from Me. ⁹ But in vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men’.”

The same Scripture applied later to the church—not only to the Roman church, but any church that put away the law of God in favor of their own “tradition.” This was why God raised up Islam to judge the church. God raised up Islam to show us what legalistic religion looks like. By threshing the church with legalistic Islamic traditions, Christians should have repented from their own legalistic ways and returned to the laws of God.

The crowning achievement of legalism is to justify hatred of all “enemies,” as if hatred is the fruit of the Spirit. Even as the Church had attempted in a carnal manner to convert men and nations by turning the cross into a sword, so also did Islam respond in kind. The only difference is that God empowered Islam to do it, whereas the Church did it in direct disobedience to the commandment of Jesus Christ.

This, then, was the divine judgment, based on the principle of equal justice, or “eye for eye” ([Exodus 21:24](#)). The judgment always fits the crime. If a man falsely accuses another, he is to be judged according to the penalty that he thought to bring upon his victim ([Deut. 19:19](#)). This is why Jesus said in [Matt. 7:1, 2](#) that if we judge others, we will be judged (held accountable) according to the same standard of measure.

In this case, Christian Rome established “traditions of men” in the same manner that the Jews had done, and so they came under the same condemnation. God then raised up Islam, another legalistic religion, to judge the church in order to reveal to Christians the folly of legalism. The solution to the problem of Islam was not to make war on Mohammed, but for the church to repent of its lawless rebellion and to put on the mind of Christ in order to interpret the law properly.

Unfortunately, the church as a whole did not understand this, and so God's Islamic judgment has continued to the present time.

The Smoke and the Locusts

The rise of Islam began in 612 A.D., the year that Mohammed began to teach, and it peaked 150 years later when Islam's religious and political capital moved from Damascus to the newly-built city of Baghdad in 762–763. [Rev. 9:1](#) says,

¹ And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth; and the key of the bottomless pit was given to him [the fifth angel].

[Rev. 9:1](#) speaks of a “falling star,” which is not to be taken literally as a star or meteor or planet. It says that God gave the key of the bottomless pit to the fifth angel. He used the key to open the abyss, and let loose what is pictured as smoke and locusts. Meteors falling from the sky do not release locusts or spiritual entities from the abyss. The “star” was Mohammed himself. He was said to fall from heaven to earth in order to show us that he was raised up by God Himself.

Hence, from the outset we learn that God took credit for raising up Mohammed and for loosing these “locusts” from the abyss. Since God does nothing without purpose, this shows that He intended to bring judgment upon the church. [Rev. 9:2, 3](#) says,

² And he opened the bottomless pit; and smoke went up out of the pit, like the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke of the pit. ³ And out of the smoke came forth locusts upon the earth; and power was given them, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

Locusts come out of the ground, and so they are a very appropriate symbol of an earthly, or carnal religion. [Rev. 9:2](#) speaks of “smoke” coming out of the pit, by which “*the sun and the air were darkened.*” Islam was to bring darkness, rather than the light of true revelation. Even the air was to be darkened. [Rev. 9:3](#) says that the locusts were not the *cause* of this darkness, but rather that the darkness brought forth the locusts. It says, “*out of the smoke came forth locusts.*” Jesus tells us in [Matt. 6:22, 23](#),

²² The lamp of the body is the eye; if therefore your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. ²³ But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

The dark revelation that Mohammed brought did not bring the true light of Christ to the earth. The Koran did not produce any sons of God, but only spiritual locusts. Locusts periodically devastated the land when they swarmed and ate everything in sight. They were considered to be a plague on account of the devastation left in their wake.

Prophetic locusts are described in the first two chapters of Joel as the army God raised up in “*the day of the Lord*” ([Joel 2:1, 11](#)). After introducing the plague of locusts in [Joel 1:4](#), we read in [Joel 2:3–11](#),

³ A fire consumes before them, and behind them a flame burns. The land is like the garden of Eden before them, but a desolate wilderness behind them, and nothing at all escapes them... ⁷ They run like mighty men; they climb the wall like soldiers... ⁸ They do not crowd each other; they march everyone in his path. When they burst through the defenses, they do not break ranks. ⁹ They rush on the city, they run on the wall; they climb into the houses, they enter through the windows like a thief... ¹¹ And the Lord utters His voice before His army... The day of the Lord is indeed great and very awesome, and who can endure it?

In light of the destructive nature of great swarms of locusts, which darken the sky and eat up every living thing in its path, [Rev. 9:4](#) says something quite strange:

⁴ And they were told that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree, but only the men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.

These locusts are not literal, for they are commanded not to hurt the grass or any green thing. Literal locusts devour everything that is green, for that is natural to locusts. Locusts cannot be denied food without quickly dying. But if these represent the adherents of Islam, then it all makes sense.

Islam's sacred color is green, and for this reason many flags from Islamic countries are green or contain green. *Koran Law forbids harming trees and all green things*. Hence, these "locusts" are not leaf-eating insects, and yet they leave devastation in their wake.

The Islamic Tax on Christians

Muslim policy was to conquer and convert people to Islam, and if they did not convert, they had to pay a special tax. In those days only non-compliance brought death. In his book, The Outline of History, H. G. Wells says on page 584,

"... everywhere they offered a choice of three alternatives; either pay tribute, or confess the true God and join us, or die."

At the beginning, when Jerusalem first surrendered to Omar in 638 (without resistance), Islamic policy was established. H. G. Wells informs us on page 586,

"... the Christians were to be tolerated, paying only a poll tax; and all the churches and all the relics were left in their possession."

Thus, [Rev. 9:5](#) was fulfilled, for the new invaders were not allowed to kill Christians and Jews but only to impose a tax upon them. In this, the Muslims were more merciful than either the Jews (in the early days of Christianity) or the Christians (when they came to power). God was merciful when He limited their divine mandate—at least in those days.

Chapter 18: The First Woe (612–762 A.D.)

Mohammed began his mission in 612, but after ten years (in 622) he had to flee for his life from the city of Medina. The year 622 is called the *hegira*, his “flight from Mecca,” and this marked the beginning date of the Islamic lunar calendar that is used to this day. Later, Mohammed successfully negotiated the conquest of Medina, and the religion spread in the same Old Covenant manner that Christianity had spread after the fall of pagan Rome—by conquest through physical arms.

We must first recognize that Islam was a carnal religious empire even as the Christian religion had become by this time. When God raised up this new religion to bring judgment upon the church, it was by the principle of an “eye for eye,” where the judgment fits the crime.

The Saracen Horsemen

The Saracens were a specific tribe, distinct from the Arabs. They were among the early converts to Islam, and so later western writers called all Arab Muslims by the term “Saracens.” The Saracens themselves were noted for their horsemanship. (In earlier times the Roman army had included Saracen cavalry.)

The “locusts” in Revelation 9 were the Muslim armies in general, but more specifically, in [Rev. 9:7–10](#) John saw the Saracen horsemen and gave us a physical description of them as they rode into battle:

⁷ And the appearance of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle; and on their heads, as it were, crowns [[turbans](#)] like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men. ⁸ And they had hair like the hair of women, and their teeth were like the teeth of lions. ⁹ And they had breastplates like breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots, of many horses rushing to battle.

This is an accurate description of the Saracens. The Saracens wore colored turbans, or “crowns.” The Greek word translated “crowns” is *stephanos*, the normal word for a laurel wreath that was given to conquerors or to those who won a contest. However, wreaths were always green in Rome or Greece. Those in [Rev. 9:7](#) are said to be yellow to show that they were not made of leaves, but of cloth. In other words, their “crowns” were turbans.

They had the faces of men, but hair like that of women. They were men who wore their hair long. This describes the Saracens who were known for their long hair and full beards.

Their “*teeth of lions*” were not literally lions’ fangs but a description of their fierceness and valor in battle. They wore iron armor and had iron breastplates which made a great clatter as they charged their horses into battle. Hence, John says in verse 9 that “*they had breastplates like breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots.*”

The Five Prophetic Months

[Revelation 9:5](#) says,

⁵ And they were not permitted to kill anyone, but to torment for five months; and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings a man.

This time period was said to be “five months.” A prophetic month is thirty “days” (i.e., years), so five months (30 x 5) is a period of 150 years. We see this by comparing the 42 months of [Rev. 13:5](#) with the 1,260 days in [Rev. 12:6](#). (1,260 is 42 x 30.) By using this model, five months is 150 years.

This time forms the first stage of political Islam, ending when the Abbasid Caliphate moved its capital from Damascus to the newly-built city of Baghdad. This event was similar to what happened in the Christian Empire, when Constantine built Constantinople and moved the capital of the Empire from Rome to his “New Rome.”

According to The Encyclopedia of World History, page 113, edited by Peter Stearns, al-Mansur founded his new capital city of Baghdad in 762.

762. FOUNDATION OF BAGHDAD, the new Abbasid capital, by al-Mansur. This first truly Islamic imperial city, situated 18 miles north of the Sassanian capital of Ctesiphon, was designed on a circular plan and was known as the City of Peace (Madinat al-Salam).

This date is important because it marks the climax of the rise of Islam precisely 150 years after Mohammed first began preaching his new religion.

The Time of Islamic Expansion

From the beginning of Mohammed’s mission in 612 until Islam’s height of power and glory, when the capital of the Islamic Empire moved from Damascus to Baghdad in 762 was 150 years. During that time of five prophetic months, as Islam was expanding, they swept across the Middle East and across North Africa. After taking Jerusalem in 638, they subdued Egypt in 641. In 668 they laid siege to Constantinople, but the city was saved by the use of an incendiary formula called “Greek fire.” Water could not extinguish it, and anyone sprayed with it would be burned to death.

In 700 they marched west and conquered Algiers. (By this time Christianity was nearly non-existent in North Africa.) By 707 they had taken all of North Africa, and from 711–713 they conquered most of the Iberian Peninsula (Spain). By 715 the Moslem Empire extended from the border of China to the Pyrenees between Spain and France.

From 720–732 the Arabs ravaged southern France until Charles Martel finally defeated them decisively at the Battle of Tours in 732 and again at Narbonne in 736. This put an end to Islam’s expansion into Europe. But Islam had entrenched itself in Spain by this time, and in 755 the Caliphate at Cordova, Spain was founded by Abd-al-Rahman.

Spain remained part of the Caliphate for more than seven centuries. But over time, territory was lost to the Europeans, and finally, in 1492, Queen Isabella expelled all Muslims and Jews. The ship carrying Columbus and five Jews left Spain for the New World about two hours before her deadline in 1492.

The Islamic armies conquered most of the territory of the Eastern Roman Empire that had been ruled from Constantinople. In 718 the Arabs sent a large fleet of ships to attack Constantinople, but they failed and the fleet was destroyed. In 748 another Arab fleet was destroyed during an attack on Cyprus. Although Islam took portions of the Balkans, they were forced to bypass the city of Constantinople for centuries, until they finally took the city in 1453.

In 760, just as the first phase of Islam was coming to a close, a Tartar tribe founded a Turkish Empire in Armenia, which proved to be the seed of the next phase of prophetic fulfillment in [Rev. 9:12–21](#). It was founded just as plans were being made to build the new city of Baghdad and move the capital there from Damascus. That move took place in 762 A.D., ending the “five months” rise of Islam.

The Abbasid Caliphate in Baghdad

Though Islam had its birth in the Arabian peninsula, Medina was too far south to remain the capital of the emerging empire. Islam’s capital was soon moved to Damascus in Syria. H. G. Wells says on page 593 of The Outline of History,

“Medina was no longer a possible centre for its vast enterprises in Asia, Africa, and the Mediterranean, and so Damascus became the usual capital of the Omayyad Caliphs.”

The Omayyad Caliphs (“successors”) were of the family of Omar I, who came to power in 634 shortly after the death of Muhammed (632) and his immediate successor, Abu Bakr (634). The Omayyad family remained in power until overthrown by the Abbasids in 750.

The Abbasid Caliphate was established in 750 by Abu al-Abbas al-Saffah (“The Bloodthirsty”), ruling from India to Syria, and along the coast of North Africa all the way to the Atlantic Ocean. However, he died of smallpox in 754, and his son, Abu Jafar al-Mansur (“The Victorious”) was his successor. Hence, it was al-Mansur who built Baghdad and moved his capital there in 762.

By this time the center of gravity for culture and civilization itself had shifted from the Christian West to the Muslim East. In Baghdad, al-Mansur gathered together the greatest intellectuals of the world. In the very time of Europe’s dark ages, where literacy was at a minimum, learning flourished in Baghdad. As H. G. Wells says on page 596,

“Arabic continued to spread until presently it had replaced Greek and become the language of educated men throughout the whole Moslem world.”

Roman civilization had largely been destroyed by the invasions from the north. Literacy and education in general had been reduced and restricted to a privileged few who could afford it. Such was the result of divine judgment upon Christian Rome for its sin and its refusal to repent. Proud Roman civilization had sunk into the dark abyss.

Apollyon and Abaddon

[Revelation 9:11](#) says,

¹¹ They have as king over them the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in the Greek he has the name Apollyon.

The Hebrew word, *Abaddon*, is translated “destruction” whenever it is used in the Old Testament. John says that its Greek equivalent is *Apollyon*. *Abaddon* is associated with *sheol* (the grave, or “hell”) in [Prov. 15:11](#) and with *death* in [Job 28:22](#). This is meant to associate this “king” with the abyss, or bottomless pit, mentioned in [Rev. 9:1](#).

Hence, I find it significant and interesting that the city at the north end of the Persian Gulf, where Iran, Iraq, and Kuwait meet, is the city of *Abadon*. In 1908 oil was discovered there, and the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (now BP) began to build its Abadon refinery. It soon became the largest oil refinery in the world.

Iran’s prime minister, Mohammed Mosaddegh nationalized the company in 1951, which caused the CIA to overthrow him two years later and to install the Shah of Iran until he was overthrown by Ayatollah Khomeini in 1979. The Abadon refinery was largely destroyed in 1980 by the Iraqi army under Saddam Hussein at the start of the Iran-Iraq war (1980–1988).

It is significant that this refinery, which was named after the spiritual “king” of Islam in [Rev. 9:11](#), should play such a prominent role in modern history. John gives us the name of this spiritual “king” in both Hebrew and Greek, as if to suggest its importance. Since the book of Revelation is written in Greek, there must be some compelling reason to include the Hebrew translation of the name.

Apollyon, or Abaddon, is the name of the spiritual entity (principality) that rules the Muslim world in general. This is not an angel of God, but an evil entity. His name identifies his character and his “calling,” as well as the nature of Islam that he inspired. Apollyon means “destroyer,” but the word is the active particle of *apollume*, which means to perish or to lose. It is the word used in [Matt. 10:6](#), where Jesus told His disciples to “go to the *lost* sheep of the house of Israel.”

These “sheep” were not literally destroyed, nor had they perished. They were simply lost. In the Old Testament, the prophet Jeremiah wrote about them in a similar passage. [Jer. 50:6](#) says, “*My people have become lost sheep.*” Here, the Hebrew word for “lost” is *abad*. Hence, the one doing the action—that is, the “loser” or “destroyer”—is *abaddon*.

So the “king” in [Rev. 9:11](#) is the same spiritual entity that was raised up to destroy Israel, to scatter them among the mountains (nations), and to cause them to become “lost sheep.” God raised up Abaddon to bring judgment upon the House of Israel for their rebellion against God and His law. This “king” still rules from the Mideast and must be overcome in order for the promises of God to be fulfilled. But to overcome Abaddon requires repentance, for one cannot fight spiritual entities by carnal means. As long as we try to do so, the power of Abaddon remains strong.

When the Twin Towers were destroyed on September 11, 2001 (or “9–11”), I immediately recognized that this was connected to [Rev. 9:11](#). I advocated repentance, rather than war. But of course, my small voice was overwhelmed by the angry calls for war and revenge. Jonathan Cahn’s book, [The Harbinger](#), later showed us that the destruction of the Twin Towers was only a *harbinger* (early warning) of a greater judgment yet to come, on account of our refusal as a nation to repent. He based much of his teaching on [Isaiah 9:9–11](#), which he connected to 9–11.

I believe that it was Abaddon, or Apollyon, “the destroyer,” who was the spiritual inspiration behind the destruction of the Twin Towers (regardless of who actually carried out the attack). Yet this is also the ruling spiritual power behind the religion of Islam itself, which God raised up to bring judgment upon the Church, even as He raised up Apollyon to “lose” the House of Israel in early times.

It seems that neither the House of Israel nor the church understood that their loss was due to their own sin and rebellion. For this reason, they rose up to fight “the enemy” and even appealed to God for assistance, not realizing that their rebellion had made God Himself their enemy ([Isaiah 63:10](#)).

Chapter 19: The Second Woe (1063–1453 A.D.)

Revelation 9 speaks of three “woes,” all of them having to do with Islam which God raised up to judge the church for its refusal to repent. The first woe came through the Saracens, who swept through the Middle East, North Africa, and into Spain. [Rev. 9:12–14](#) says,

¹² The first woe is past; behold, two woes are still coming after these things. ¹³ And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, ¹⁴ one saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, “Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.”

The second woe began with the Seljuk Turks, then extended through the Ottoman Turks, and finally concluded with the fall of Constantinople in 1453. [Rev. 9:12–21](#) describes this very well. It begins in verse 14 with the release of the “four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.” These are not men, but angels, who are released to judge the Church through the Seljuk Turks and their successors.

The time begins with the death of Tughril Beg, who had been the head of the Seljuk Turkish Empire. He conquered Baghdad in 1055 nearly 300 years after it had been built. However, Tughril Beg died shortly afterward in 1063. Then his nephew, Alp Arslan succeeded him. This was the beginning of a 391-year period to the final overthrow of the prize—Constantinople in 1453 A.D.—which was taken in the 391st year from 1063.

Arslan first conquered Georgia and Armenia from the Byzantines (i.e., the Eastern Roman Empire). Then as he prepared to conquer Egypt in 1071, a new Byzantine army marched against him, and he crushed it catastrophically. From this point on, the Eastern Roman Empire steadily declined while the Islamic forces increased in power.

The Great Schism

During this time in history, “the great schism” between Eastern and Western Christianity split the Church. This occurred in 1054, just a year before Tughril Beg conquered Baghdad in 1055. In the final analysis, “the great schism” in the Church between East and West, or between the Greek Orthodox Church and the Vatican, boiled down to the Latin word *filioque* in the creed.

In the original Nicene Creed (325 A.D.) the bishops had determined that the Holy Spirit “proceeds from the Father.” In the 6th century, the Church in Spain added to this, saying that the Holy Spirit “proceeds from the Father and the Son (*filioque*).” The custom spread in the West, but Rome itself did not officially adopt the alteration until 936 A.D.

The Vatican accused the Eastern Churches of heresy for not using this innovation. The final break came in 1054 when Roman Cardinal Humbert excommunicated Michael Cerularius, Patriarch of Constantinople. The Patriarch responded in kind. The Church has been split ever since, and it was not until February 12, 2016 that the two sides began to re-engage. Pope Francis met face to face with Russian Orthodox patriarch Kirill.

One can only imagine Jesus rolling His eyes over men’s stupidity and legalistic mindset. But this split was not so much over a point of doctrine as it was over who would submit to who. The split was over the leadership position in the Christian religion. It is fitting, in my view, that the second woe should be unleashed against the church shortly after this carnal fight over church leadership.

Nine years after “the great schism,” Alp Arslan came to power in Baghdad and was empowered by God to begin the first of three rounds of judgment (“woes”) upon the Church. Not that Islam was any more unified than the Church. There was as much infighting among them as in the Church, for both religions were ruled by carnal men driven by personal ambition.

The Rise of the Turks

Up to the tenth century, the Islamic Arabs had been a dynamic, well educated people, particularly after Baghdad became their capital in 762 A.D. But by the end of the tenth century, they had lost much of their “fire,” and a new force came into play—the Turks. In 977 a Turkish slave, Subuktigin, established a kingdom which spread over what is now Afghanistan. His successor expanded his kingdom into Iran and northern India.

However, in 1037 they were in turn defeated by another Turkish tribe, the Seljuks, under Tughril Beg. When he died in 1063, his nephew, Alp Arslan, succeeded him and began expanding his kingdom westward into Armenia, taking territory from both the Abbasid Caliphate in Baghdad and from Constantinople, or “New Rome,” as it was called.

The rise of the Turkish Empire, however, was interrupted for a time by the Mongolian Empire, which began in 1206 when Genghis Khan was crowned as its leader. For the next century, the Mongols spread west into Eastern Europe and the Mideast. Their capture of Baghdad destroyed the Abbasid Caliphate and prepared the way for the later rise of the Turkish Ottoman Empire.

The Mongol Invasion

By 1150 gunpowder had been discovered in China and was used in battle to frighten evil spirits and horses with the noise of the explosions. They never used it effectively, but in the 13th century the Mongols, led by the grandson of Genghis Khan, swept west across Asia and conquered Baghdad on February 10, 1258. They massacred many citizens and destroyed the great libraries, including the one known as the House of Wisdom. Historians say that this effectively ended the Islamic Golden Age.

The Mongols captured Kiev and controlled territory from the Pacific to the Baltic by the year 1297. Although the empire declined steadily afterward, the West became aware that there were powerful and civilized lands east of “the known world.” This changed their world view. The “silk road” soon brought trade between East and West, but the overland route was long and dangerous. This motivated some to find a sea route to India, Indonesia, and China itself. Some sailed around the horn of Africa, while others sailed west in the attempt to go around the globe to India. They accidentally found the Americas.

The Mongol invasion of the Mideast brought the knowledge of gunpowder and the printing press. The Mongols eventually retreated, but their technological advances remained and had a profound effect upon the Western world, as we will see shortly. Islam despised the printing presses, which were considered to be irreligious, but they found gunpowder to be useful. Europe used both technologies but the printing press proved to be the key to education. Hence, while the Islamic civilization declined after the Mongols destroyed Baghdad, European civilization was revived by the printing press which the Mongols had brought with them.

When the Mongols retreated, the Osmani (or “Ottoman”) Turks came to power. Baghdad had been broken, and many of its educated class had fled to relative safety to Armenia, strengthening the Ottomans. It was not long before they learned to use gunpowder in a new weapon called the *cannon*. Their first great use of gunpowder came in the siege of Constantinople, where their cannons breached the walls of the city on May 29, 1453. [Rev. 9:12–21](#) describes this very well, as we will see.

The 391-year Time Frame of the Second Woe

[Revelation 9:15](#), [16](#) reads,

¹⁵ And the four angels who had prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released, so that they might kill a third of mankind. ¹⁶ And the number of the armies of the horsemen was two hundred million; I heard the number of them.

Verse 15 gives us the time frame during which these four angels were to capture Constantinople. It is 391 years. A prophetic “year” is 360 days, or in this case, 360 *years*. A prophetic “month” is 30 days, or in this case, 30 *years*. A prophetic “day” is one year. An hour is 15 days, if we use the 24-hour model, or 30 days, if we use a 12-hour model. Adding these together, the time frame for the second woe is no more than a month beyond 391 years.

The time begins in 1063 A.D. with the crowning of Alp Arslan, and it ends in 1453 with the capture of Constantinople and the fall of Constantinople, the capital of what remained of the Eastern Roman Empire (i.e., Byzantium). Constantinople fell in the 391st year, according to the time frame given in [Rev. 9:15](#).

Neither the four angels nor the two hundred million in their army are literal people. These are all pictured as coming from the river Euphrates, and all of them had been “bound” up to that time. It is an event occurring in the spirit that pictures spiritual beings, unclean spirits, who are empowered by God to judge the Eastern Roman Empire, using physical armies as proxies.

Recall that the Roman Empire was really divided into three parts: Europe, Africa, and the area controlled by Constantinople, including Greece, the Balkans, Asia Minor, and Syria-Palestine. The judgment of the second woe was loosed upon this Eastern “third” of the Empire. Hence, they were given authority to “*kill a third of mankind*.” From John’s perspective, “mankind” did not include all the people of the world, or those on yet-unknown continents, but those in the general sphere of the Christian Roman Empire.

The Fall of Constantinople

In [Rev. 9:17–19](#) John describes the cannons they used to break down the walls of the city.

¹⁷ And this is how I saw in the vision the horses and those who sat on them: the riders had breastplates the color of fire and of hyacinth and of brimstone; and the heads of the horses are like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths proceed fire and smoke and brimstone. ¹⁸ A third of mankind was killed by these three plagues, by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone, which proceeded out of their mouths. ¹⁹ For the power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails; for their tails are like serpents and have heads; and with them they do harm.



The old cannons used in the siege were shaped to have the heads of lions, out of which belched fire and brimstone every time the cannons were fired. Howard Rand, who personally saw some of these cannons in London after the British had captured them many years later, writes of these cannons in his 1959 book, [Marvels of Prophecy](#), pp. 81–82, saying,

“Anything with four legs used in war, John would designate as a horse. He beheld men astride these iron horses. He watched them ramming in the powder and the shot. He observed the burning of the old-fashioned fuse, serpent-like, with its sputtering flame of fire at the tail, or touchhole, of the cannon. This was followed by the fire, smoke and brimstone issuing out of the mouths of these iron horses with lion’s heads, for the cannon used in the siege of Constantinople were cast in the form of lions.”

The cannon pictured earlier is taken from the cover of Marvels of Prophecy. These canons still stand as silent witnesses to what John saw in Revelation 9. The conquest of Constantinople in 1453 is one of the great moments in history that has changed the world.

The Eastern Orthodox Church lost its main power base in 1453. Although the technical head of the Orthodox Church is still the Patriarch of what is now Istanbul, the real seat of power moved first to Kosovo and later to Moscow.

With the fall of Constantinople, many Greek-speaking doctors of the Church fled into Europe, bringing with them Greek manuscripts of the New Testament. At the same time, the printing press had been discovered, and in 1452 the Gutenberg Bible was first printed, bringing the Scriptures to the common people. This is the subject of our next study in Revelation 10.

Chapter 20: The Mongols in Prophecy

I have already shown how the rise of Islam brought judgment to the church, but also how the Mongol invasion and conquest of Baghdad interrupted Islam's expansion. Genghis Khan was the founder of the Yuan dynasty which swept across Asia, bringing judgment upon Islam. He was reported to have said:

"I am the punishment of God... If you had not committed great sins, God would not have sent a punishment like me upon you."

So what prophetic role did the Mongols play in their conquest of Baghdad? First, some biblical background is in order.

Saul's Eighteenth Year

Solomon laid the foundation of his temple in the 480th year from the Exodus ([1 Kings 6:1](#)). He finished the temple itself in seven years (year 487 from the Exodus), and then it took an unknown number of years to complete the construction of the temple vessels before the glory of God filled the temple. I believe it took another three years and that the glory came down 490 years after the Exodus.

If the fourth year of Solomon was also the 480th year from the Exodus, then Solomon's first year was 476–477 years after the Exodus. Forty years earlier, David had become king (436–437). Saul reigned 22 years after his disqualification, so he was disqualified 414–415 years after the Exodus. We note here that 414 is the number indicating Cursed Time, as I explained in my book, [Secrets of Time](#).

The Amalekites attacked Israel shortly after the Exodus from Egypt, because this attack occurred before Israel arrived at Mount Sinai (Exodus 17). Hence, in our study of timing, we can equate the year of the Exodus with the year that God commissioned Saul to bring judgment upon the Amalekites. God had vowed to wage "*war against Amalek from generation to generation*" ([Exodus 17:16](#)), and told Moses not to forget this; but then God seemed to forget it for centuries.

But God had not really forgotten. He was simply full of grace. Cursed Time is a grace period that gives men and nations opportunity to repent. In the case of national curses, this grace period lasts 414 years or multiples of 414 years. In the case of Amalek, God gave them 414 years of grace before executing divine judgment upon them for their attack upon Israel ([1 Sam. 15:1](#), [2](#), [3](#)).

At the same time, God was also dealing with Saul, who was a rebellious Pentecostal king. Not only was Saul crowned on Pentecost ("*the day of wheat harvest*," [1 Sam. 12:17](#)), but he was also filled with the Spirit and even prophesied ([1 Sam. 10:10](#)). This makes him the main Old Testament prophetic type of the church.

Saul's refusal to execute Agag, the Amalekite king, disqualified him as God's earthly agent (judge). The prophet told him in [1 Sam. 15:23](#), "*Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He has also rejected you from being king.*"

When Saul was disqualified, Samuel mourned for him ([1 Sam. 16:1](#)) until God told him to go to Bethlehem to find another king to anoint. He found David, son of Jesse, and when he anointed David, "*the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord terrorized him*" ([1 Sam. 16:14](#)). This prophesies of the church being disqualified during the Age of Pentecost.

This was how the Roman church, as well as the Protestant churches and all that pertains to Pentecost, were disqualified legally from reigning in the Tabernacles Age to come. It does not mean that we ought to forsake or renounce Pentecost—or Passover, for that matter. It simply means that our Passover and Pentecost experience is insufficient, due to the corruption of human nature. We must go beyond the first two feasts, following the pattern of David.

David's Preparation and Early Life

Saul died after reigning forty years ([Acts 13:21](#)), and David took the throne at the age of thirty ([2 Sam. 5:4](#)). This means Saul had reigned ten years before David was even born. It also means that David was just eight years old when Saul was disqualified (in the 18th year of his reign) and when David was anointed for the first time.

This explains why David was not with his brothers when the Israelite army was confronted by Goliath some time later ([1 Sam. 17:17, 18](#)). The lawful military age was twenty. David was somewhere between ten and twenty years old when he killed Goliath.

More specifically, David was eighteen when he fled from Saul, even as Joseph was eighteen when he arrived in Egypt to be trained by the Lord through slavery. Eighteen is the biblical number of oppression or bondage. It seems that tests and trials like this occurred to biblical characters when they were eighteen, or, in the case of kings, their eighteenth year. Not only Saul, but David himself was run off his throne by Absalom in the eighteenth year of his reign.

So we can say with reasonable certainty that David killed Goliath between the age of ten and the age of eighteen. Yet it is unlikely that David was under 14, for that seems too young. More likely, he was 15, as we will see. After killing Goliath, David was immediately brought to Saul's house ([1 Sam. 18:2](#)), and as they returned, the women sang "*Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands*" ([1 Sam. 18:7](#)). Saul was angry, and "the next day" an evil spirit caused him to prophesy ([1 Sam. 18:10](#)) and to try to kill David with a javelin!

David escaped, but Saul then became afraid of him and "*removed him from his presence and appointed him as commander of a thousand*" ([1 Sam. 18:13](#)). He hoped that if David were exposed to danger, he might be killed on account of his inexperience. However, David only became more successful.

We are not told how long David remained as captain of the Israelite army, but the point of this is to show how we may pinpoint these events by the events that took place later in church history. After all, church history was the fulfillment of these prophetic types, and every event in the history of Saul's reign was repeated in church history.

The Mongols Fulfill Prophecy

The Mongol conquest of Baghdad in 1258 A.D. serves as the fulfillment of David's successful battle against Goliath. In this case, Islam was the "giant" threatening Saul's army—that is, the church and the Western nations in general. The year 1258, in fact, fell on the 25th Jubilee of the Age of Pentecost, which corresponds to the 25th year of Saul's reign. This was seven years after Saul's disqualification, and therefore David was fifteen years old (8 plus 7) when he killed Goliath.

From the day of Pentecost in 33 A.D., when the Pentecostal Age began, add 25 x 49 years, and we get 1225 years. Add this to 33, and we come to 1258 A.D., the year Baghdad fell to the Mongols.

Is this mere coincidence? No, for we read in history how Genghis Khan came to power in 1206 and conquered his first nation (Western Xia) in 1209. The year 1209 was 49 years earlier. In other words, from 1209–1258 we see the history of the church's 25th Jubilee cycle from beginning to end, and it is marked by the rise of the Mongols until their crowning achievement—the capture of Baghdad.

Here is the historical record:

"Mongol leader Genghis Khan commanded some initial raids against Western Xia before launching a full-scale invasion in 1209. This invasion marked both the first major invasion conducted by Genghis and the beginning of the Mongol invasion of China."

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mongol_conquest_of_Western_Xia

After making Western Xia a vassal state, he conquered China and then moved west. Genghis Khan died in 1226, but his family continued the war in his place.

*“The **Siege of Baghdad**, which lasted from January 29 until February 10, 1258, entailed the investment, capture, and sack of Baghdad, the capital of the Abbasid Caliphate, by Ilkhanate Mongol forces and allied troops*

“The Mongols executed [the Caliph] Al-Musta'sim and massacred many residents of the city, which was left greatly depopulated. The siege is considered to mark the end of the Islamic Golden Age, during which the caliphs had extended their rule from the Iberian Peninsula to Sindh, and which was also marked by many cultural achievements.”

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siege_of_Baghdad_%281258%29

The fall of Baghdad gave the West a reprieve of sorts from the Islamic threat. In another account, we read,

“Baghdad fell to the Mongols in 1258. It was then the biggest, richest city in the world. It was where the Caliph lived. He ruled the Muslim world, at least in name. Baghdad **has fallen to a non-Muslim army only one other time: in 2003 to the Americans.**”

<https://abagond.wordpress.com/2016/03/21/the-fall-of-baghdad-to-the-mongols/>

From a prophetic standpoint, the Mongols played the role of David killing Goliath, as applied in that particular time period. “Saul” had reigned 25 Jubilees, and “David” was fifteen. Just as the killing of Goliath helped the Israelites in ancient times, so also did the overthrow of Baghdad assist the church in its 25th Jubilee.

God’s Gift, the City of Peace

The meaning of Baghdad is “God’s gift,” but its official name was *Madiniat al-Salaam*, the City of Peace, which is also the meaning of Jerusalem. Both cities, in fact, turned out to be carnal cities, not fulfilling the mandate of peace, but (as we read of Jerusalem itself) becoming “*the bloody city*” ([Ezekiel 24:6](#)). In fact, it was for this reason (legally speaking) that the earthly Jerusalem was rejected in favor of the heavenly city.

The Islamic City of Peace is mentioned here:

“When the Abbasid caliph, al-Mansur, founded a completely new city for his capital, he chose the name Madinat al-Salaam or City of Peace. This was the official name on coins, weights, and other official usage, although the common people continued to use the old name. By the 11th century, ‘Baghdad’ became almost the exclusive name for the world-renowned metropolis.”

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baghdad>

The main difference, perhaps, between Baghdad and Jerusalem is that the name Jerusalem is plural—or rather, a dual—while Baghdad is singular. In other words, there was only one Baghdad, but there were two Jerusalems, one heavenly, the other earthly, so that the fulfillment of God’s promises to the city could be fulfilled even after the glory departed from the earthly city, never to return ([Ezekiel 11:23](#)).

[Rev. 11:8](#) identifies the earthly Jerusalem with Sodom, Egypt, and Babylon itself. Baghdad, too, is a type of Mystery Babylon, the great harlot that is the prophetic rival of the bride of Christ. In that sense, Baghdad is represented by Goliath, the oppressor. Even as Babylon fell after 70 years (604–534 B.C.), so also Baghdad fell to US troops in April 2003, which was 70½ years after Iraq had become an independent nation in October of 1932.

The Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of 1930 granting Iraq full independence, was to take full effect when Iraq joined the League of Nations. This took place on October 3, 1932.

Babylon as a Monetary System

The original city of Babylon was a center of trade and finance. Modern Mystery Babylon is a worldwide banking and financial system based on debt and usury, using fiat money. Today we see the Babylonian system entrenched in the West, and it is presently being overthrown by the kings of the east, who are re-introducing a gold-backed monetary system that President Nixon destroyed in 1971.

Chinese currency is called renminbi, or yuan. China is in the process of setting up a gold-backed yuan, which, when completed, will rival all fiat currencies that rely totally upon faith in the value of currencies created out of thin air and backed by nothing. “Goliath” today, in fact, is the monetary system, because the giant’s name comes from the Hebrew word *galah*, which is often translated “DISCOVER” (credit card).

We only need to look at the tall buildings where these financial headquarters are located to see that they are “giants” in the land.

The conflict today between Babylon and the kings of the east was foreshadowed by Genghis Khan and his sons, who invaded Baghdad in 1258. How? Because Genghis Khan was the first ruler of a new dynasty known as the *Yuan* Dynasty. Chinese currency goes by two names: the *yuan* and *renminbi*.

“Genghis Khan (1162–1227) and his sons set the foundation for the Yuan Dynasty (1279–1368) by defeating the Western Xia and conquering Central Asia, Mongolia, and the Hexi Corridor.”

<http://www.chinahighlights.com/travelguide/china-history/the-yuan-dynasty.htm>

The Mongols, of course, had no idea how they were fulfilling prophecy, nor could they conceive of the way they were establishing prophetic precedents for the financial overthrow of Mystery Babylon more than seven centuries later. But that is the unique character of prophecy and the divine plan, and when we study history, we can see God’s hints from the past and understand how He is working in the present.

Chapter 21: The Church Refuses to Repent

[Revelation 9:20, 21](#) concludes the second woe, saying,

²⁰ And the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, so as not to worship demons, and the idols of gold and of silver and of brass and of stone and of wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk; ²¹ and they did not repent of their murders nor of their sorceries nor of their immorality nor of their thefts.

As with Israel of old, the church set aside the law of God in favor of “traditions of men.” Yet when we study Scripture and learn how the temple priests in Jesus’ day believed and taught, it is clear that most religious leaders never understood that they were displeasing to God. They were always taken by surprise when divine judgment struck them. Most of the time, they refused to believe that God was really judging the nation, so they concluded either that their invaders were simply too powerful for them, or that they had incurred divine disfavor for tolerating “heretics” and other doctrinal opponents.

Such is human nature. Such also is the nature of spiritual blindness. The church was no different in this regard from ancient Israel. The remedy is always found in Scripture itself, but one must have a proper understanding of it in order to see what is happening in the world. One must also know the mind of the Author in order to understand Scripture properly.

The Iconoclastic Movement

John tells us that the church was judged by the “woes” on account of its idolatry—worshipping “*the works of their hands*.” While there were some images (or “icons”) used by some churches prior to Constantine, most of these were adopted after 312 A.D., when Christianity was legalized in Rome.

A second huge boost in their popularity came after the Emperor Justinian changed the laws of the Empire in 534 A.D. It did not occur to most of them that the second commandment might express God’s opinion about such images.

In 717–718 the Saracens laid siege to Constantinople (for the second time). They were unsuccessful, but Emperor Leo III felt the pressure as Islamics ridiculed the Christian West for their veneration of statues and images, calling them idol worship. At the same time he was disgusted with the image trade and the superstitious claims being made to sell their products. And so, from 726–730 A.D. Leo issued a series of iconoclastic (“icon-breaking”) decrees in the attempt to eradicate idol worship in the church.

The patriarch of Constantinople resigned his post in 730 rather than submit to the decree. In Rome, popes Gregory I and Gregory II also strongly opposed these laws and refused to submit to them. Leo sent a fleet to subdue the revolts, but his fleet was destroyed by storms.

The Emperor sent an army to put down the revolt, but it too was defeated in bloody battles at Ravenna. After the open warfare abated, the Eastern emperor still remained the nominal head of the West, but his power was broken. Pope Gregory did not intend to usurp any political power, but he set a precedent that later popes were to follow. In 731, just five years after Leo’s edict, a synod in Rome excommunicated all those who would attack the images of the saints. Though the emperor was not mentioned by name, it was clear to all that he and his theologians in the East had been excommunicated by the one who called himself “Universal Bishop.”

This ended the controversy, and Leo died in 741 without succeeding in his endeavor to rid the church of its idols.

Leo’s iconoclastic edicts were so distasteful that the split between East and West widened. Leo’s failure to bring the West to heel largely undercut his power over the western part of the empire. The power vacuum was filled by the

Roman popes, who became the spokesmen for the passionate voices of the religious people who desired to retain their icons.

The Donation of Pepin

The decline of Leo's power over Italy was matched by the rising power of the Lombards in northern Italy, who took many cities in Italy and soon threatened Rome itself. In 755 the Lombard threat brought Pope Stephen to seek help from Pepin, King of the Franks in the north. Their arrangement was that Pepin would help the Pope retake those cities. Instead of giving them back to the nominal rule of the Emperor in the East, they would be given as Papal States to the Roman Bishop. This transaction, which came in 754 A.D. at the midpoint of the "seven times" of divine judgment, came to be known as the Donation of Pepin. (See my book, [Daniel: Prophet of the Ages, Book 3, chapter 22](#) for further information.)

Thus, Pope Stephen obtained political power over about 20 cities, including Ravenna, Ancona, Bologna, Ferrara, Iesi, and Gubbio, giving him a good-sized wedge of territory along the Adriatic coast of Italy. This made the Pope a feudal lord and gave the papacy the right to collect taxes from those cities. More important was the fact that the Papal States gave the popes greater autonomy from the emperors in Constantinople.

From this point on, the papacy became a prize, not only for the spiritually ambitious, but also for those who desired political power and the wealth that could be made from it. As E. R. Chamberlin wrote in his 1969 book, [The Bad Popes](#), page 17,

"But now that the bishop of Rome held not only the keys of heaven but also the keys of more than a score of cities, each with its revenues, the attraction of the office was considerably magnified.

"The first of the papal riots arising from the donation occurred in 767, when, on the death of the reigning pope, one of the numerous local lordlings recognized the opportunity and hastening to Rome, proposed his own brother as successor. The fact that the brother was disqualified because he was a layman was easily overcome, for he was ordained cleric, subdeacon, deacon, and priest—and then consecrated as bishop and pope on the same day. Rival factions immediately arose and two more popes appeared. The first contestant had his eyes dug out and was left for dead. The second was murdered outright and it was only when the third appealed to the hated Lombards for protection that some sort of order was restored."

Those who have not studied the history of the papacy might be shocked that such things could happen. But this is only the tiniest tip of the iceberg. The moral character of the popes was so carnal and even downright criminal that the people in Italy soon became immune to it. They came to expect such behavior. Most did not question the divine right of the popes to rule men, but they did regret that God had given them such a right. In the centuries that followed, nearly all of the popes had multiple mistresses, who bore them many illegitimate children—many of whom became cardinals and popes after them.

Conditions in the Eighteenth Jubilee

The eighteenth Jubilee of the Church extended from 866–915 A.D. The importance of this year is in the fact that King Saul was a type of the church under Pentecost, and he was disqualified from having a perpetual dynasty in the eighteenth year of his reign. Each year in the life of King Saul prophesied of a Jubilee cycle in church history. Here is the long list of popes, along with the date that each became pope during that time:

Nicolas I (858–866)

Adrian II (867)

John VIII (872)

Martin II (882)

Adrian III (884)

Stephen VI (885)
Formosus I (891)
Boniface VI (896)
Stephen VII (897)
Romanus (897)
Theodore II (898)
John IX (898)
Benedict IV (901)
Leo V (903)
Christopher I (904)
Sergius III (905)
Anastasius III (910)
Lando (912)
John X (912)

The eighteenth Jubilee began in the last year of Pope Nicolas I in Rome. He reigned from 858–866 A.D. Of him Cormenin says,

“He was the first who ordained that the accession of the popes should be celebrated by a brilliant enthronement, and to leave to posterity an example of his own audacity and the mean spirit of the emperor, he exacted that [King] Louis should come on foot to meet him, that he should hold the bridle of his horse, and thus conduct him from the church of St. Peter to the palace of the Lateran.” (A Complete History of the Popes of Rome, Vol. 1, page 234)

Nicolas wrote a letter to the bishops of Lorraine, saying,

“You affirm that you are submissive to your sovereign, in order to obey the words of the apostle Peter, who said, ‘Be subject to the prince, because he is above all mortals in this world.’ But you appear to forget that we, as the vicar of Christ, have the right to judge all men; thus, before obeying kings, you owe obedience to us; and if we declare a monarch guilty, you should reject him from your communion until we pardon him.

“We alone have the power to bind and to loose, to absolve Nero, and to condemn him; and Christians cannot, under penalty of excommunication, execute other judgment than ours, which alone is infallible.” (Cormenin, p. 242)

He wrote another letter stating,

“Know, prince, that the vicars of Christ are above the judgment of mortals; and that the most powerful sovereigns have no right to punish the crimes of popes, how enormous soever they may be. Your thoughts should be occupied by the efforts which they accomplish for the correction of the church, without disquieting yourself about their actions; for no matter how scandalous or criminal may be the debaucheries of the pontiffs, you should obey them, for they are seated on the chair of St. Peter. And did not Jesus Christ himself, even when condemning the excesses of the scribes and Pharisees, command obedience to them, because they were the interpreters of the law of Moses?” (Cormenin, p. 243)

Cormenin continues on page 248 about Pope Nicolas,

“It is evident,” wrote Nicolas, “that the popes can neither be bound by any earthly power, nor even by that of the apostle if he should return upon earth; since Constantine the Great has recognized that the pontiffs held the place of God upon earth, the divinity not being able to be judged by any living man. We are then infallible, and whatever may be our acts, we are not accountable for them but to ourselves.”

Such was the pontiff who brought the church to the start of its eighteenth Jubilee. In this, we see the prophetic connection to the eighteenth year of King Saul, in which time he was called to bring judgment upon the Amalekites.

The Amalekites had attacked Israel as they came out of Egypt, and as a result, God had laid a curse upon that nation in [Exodus 17:14–16](#). This put Amalek on Cursed Time, which means Amalek had 414 years in which to repent before judgment was executed.

They did not repent, and since Saul was king 414 years later, he was the one divinely called to execute judgment upon Amalek. The story is told in 1 Samuel 15. Saul, however, spared the unrepentant King Agag, and thereby Saul took Agag's curse upon himself. This disqualified him from ruling Israel, and though he ruled yet another 22 years, his dynasty was destined to end. Samuel told him later in [1 Sam. 15:23](#),

²³ For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He has also rejected you from being king.

Verse 35 concludes: “*And the Lord regretted that He had made Saul king over Israel.*”

What happened to King Saul inevitably happened also to the Roman church. The church's eighteenth Jubilee saw so much corruption that this marked the point where God rejected the church. From that point on, it was decided in the divine court that the church, anointed by Pentecost, would ultimately give way to a greater church with a Tabernacles anointing. Such a church was foreshadowed by King David, the type of overcomer.

The House of Theophylact

Cardinal Baronius, known as the Father of Catholic History, described the tenth century in this way:

“A century that for its violence and its lack of all goodness ought to be called the Iron Century; for the monstrosity of its evil the Leaden Century; for the meagerness of its literature the Dark Century.” (A History of the Popes, Joseph McCabe, p. 213)

Joseph McCabe, a disillusioned priest who became an atheist in the late 1800's, commented on Baronius' assertion, saying,

“If he continues to speak of the tenth century as the Iron Century or the Dark Age, he means only as regards Rome and the greater part of Papal Europe.” (McCabe, p. 213)

Pope Sergius III, who became pope in 905 A.D., had a mistress named Theodora, the wife of a duke and senator named Theophylact. Sergius also had a son by one of Theodora's young daughters named Marozia. E. R. Chamberlin tells us,

“The true master of Rome was Pope Sergius and Theodora owed her influence to the fact that her daughter Marozia was Sergius' mistress ...

“In whatever manner Theodora exploited her position, by the time of Pope Sergius' death in 911 she had moved from indirect to direct control. Rome might, reasonably, have expected another murderous prelude to the next election. Instead, two of Theodora's nominees ascended the throne with the minimum of fuss, reigned for a little over a year each, and quietly descended into the grave. Only then did she turn her attention to the boldest, most cynical act of all her career: the transferring of a lover from the bishopric of Ravenna to the bishopric of Rome.” (Chamberlin, p. 28).

Chamberlin goes on to quote Liudprand, the bishop of Cremona, in his account of that time:

“According to him, Theodora fell in love with a certain John, an ambitious young cleric in Ravenna who frequently came to Rome on official business. Under Theodora’s protection, the young man progressed steadily in his career and was at last made bishop, a post that ended his frequent trips to Rome. ‘Thereupon Theodora, like a harlot fearing that she would have few opportunities of bedding with her sweetheart, forced him to abandon his bishopric and take for himself—O monstrous crime!—the Papacy of Rome.’ In 914 Bishop John of Ravenna became Pope John X.” (Chamberlin, pp. 28, 29)

According to Cormanin, John himself was “the son of a nun and a priest” (A Complete History of the Popes, Vol. 1, p. 285). In his account, we read about John,

“His beauty caused him to be remarked by Theodora, the mistress of Pope Sergius, who became violently enamored of him. The ambitious youth yielded to the passion of Theodora, and thus prepared the way of arriving at the sovereign pontificate.

“His mistress, who was all-powerful in Rome, caused him first to be named to the bishopric of Bologna; but before he was consecrated, the prelate of Ravenna having died, he was chosen archbishop of that city. At last Theodora, fearful of the infidelity of her lover, if he remained in an archbishopric remote from Rome, caused him to be ordained pope on the death of [Pope] Lando.

“Platinus, an historian always correct in his assertions, says, that previous in this last election, John had been ignominiously driven from his See by the people of Ravenna, for his scandals and his crimes.” (Cormanin, p. 285)

Historical records do not tell us the ultimate fate of Theodora or of her legal husband, Theophylact. However, their daughter Marozia continued to be very influential in Rome and in the papacy. While she was still in her late teens, she was given in marriage to a German named Alberic, who had come to Rome with the title of marquis of Camerino. His title as *marquis* indicated that he owned land, which at that time was obtained only by means of the sword.

Alberic was an able soldier, and he allied himself with Pope John and Judge Theophylact in a triumvirate of power which perhaps saved Rome from the invasion of the Saracens. The Saracens had been moving up the Italian peninsula steadily and by 924 had established themselves just 30 miles from Rome. The triumvirate of Rome then raised a huge army in 926 and destroyed the Saracens who had menaced Italy for two generations.

Historical records then go dark, and we do not know the fate of Theodora and Theophylact. Even Alberic himself disappears from the records. Marozia, however, continued in her mother’s footsteps. Benedict, the monkish chronicler, laments that she was “lord of the city.” Her ambition was to merge the papacy with her own family and promote the principle of a hereditary pope. She married a feudal lord of Tuscany named Guy, who brought his own soldiers to Rome. First they took over the Castle of Sant’Angelo. Then in 928 their soldiers took Pope John captive and imprisoned him in the Castle. Chamberlin tells us of the irony:

“There, a year later, he died either by suffocation or starvation, the first of the popes to be created by a woman [Theodora], and now destroyed by her daughter [Marozia].” (p. 35)

Cormanin says that Pope John died in 936 after spending some years in prison.

Two short papacies came to pass before Marozia’s son, Octavian, became pope in 931 at the age of sixteen. He was the son of Pope Sergius and Marozia, and he took the name Pope John XI. However, he was weak in character, so Marozia sought a more powerful alliance with her late husband’s half-brother, Hugh. Cormanin tells us,

“She poisoned her husband, Guy, and offered her hand, and the principality of Rome to King Hugh, his half brother.” (p. 288).

Hugh was Marozia's third husband. Her first husband, Alberic, seeing how Marozia had killed her second husband, knew that his life was also in danger as soon as a pretext could be found.

During one of the many feasts after their wedding, Marozia deliberately humiliated Alberic by making him the water boy to wash Hugh's hands. Alberic spilled the water, and Hugh slapped him on the face. Alberic ran out of the castle and led a revolt. The Romans responded immediately and stormed the castle while Hugh's army was stationed outside the city. Hugh abandoned the castle, along with his new wife, let down by a rope where the castle intersected the city walls, and escaped with his army. The mob captured Marozia, handed her over to Alberic, and then she disappears from the historical record.

Hugh declared his marriage to Marozia to be invalid and married again.

Such was the condition of church leadership in the eighteenth Jubilee cycle of Church history, which corresponds prophetically to the eighteenth year of King Saul. Bishop Liudprand called it the age of "pornocracy," i.e., *rule by means of immorality*, and later church historians followed his lead.

While the Roman church has long taught that it will retain the divine right to rule, and that the church (meaning the Roman church) will never be overthrown, this is simply not true. It was not true for King Saul, nor is it true for the Roman church. Both were disqualified in their eighteenth year—or in this case, the eighteenth Jubilee—and for the same reason: rebellion against God.

Hence, [Rev. 9:20](#) and [21](#) indicate that the church refused to repent of its idolatry and immorality, even after coming under divine pressure from Islam. Nonetheless, God did not see fit to overthrow the Roman church immediately. It was the same with King Saul, who reigned another 22 years after his disqualification.

And so we come to the tenth chapter of Revelation, where the historical account continues with events that gave birth to the Protestant Reformation.

Book 4

A study of Revelation 10–12.

Chapter 1: The Little Book

We come now to the tenth chapter of Revelation. It begins properly with the fall of Constantinople, the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire, in 1453. The lack of repentance in the church remained throughout the entire time of the first two woes until the city fell. We would have expected no less, since the church's pattern had already been set prophetically by King Saul, who likewise remained unrepentant to the end.

After the ninth chapter, the revelation given to John shifts to one of the most important innovations ever to come to Europe—the printing press—which allowed the Scriptures to be produced inexpensively for the average layman. No longer were the Scriptures contained in huge, hand-written books chained to the front of a cathedral and written in a language (Latin) that was unknown to the common people. The word of God quite suddenly became “*a little book which was open.*”

[Revelation 10:1](#), [2](#) says,

1 And I saw another strong angel coming down out of heaven, clothed with a cloud; and the rainbow was upon his head, and his face was like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire. ² and he had in his hand a little book which was open.

We have already seen how the Osmani Turks (or “Ottomans”) came to power after the Mongols left the region and returned to Mongolia. The Ottoman Turks learned about gunpowder from them and soon developed its military use in cannons. Their first great use of gunpowder came in the siege of Constantinople in 1453, where their cannons breached the walls of the city on May 29, 1453. At the same time in history, the printing press came into use in Europe, turning the Bible into a LITTLE book.

The Printing Press

[Asimov's Chronology of the World](#), by Isaac Asimov (1991) p. 206, says,

“Printing utterly changed the world and it (along with the fall of Constantinople, the end of the Hundred Years War, and the discovery of the American continents—all of which took place in this period) marks the transition from medieval to modern times. Printing, one must surely suspect, was the most fundamental of these changes.”

Asimov recognizes that of the three huge historical events in those days, “printing... was the most fundamental of these changes.” The availability of books—especially the Scriptures—brought learning and changed both the secular and the religious world.

The Chinese had been printing on paper since the 8th century. Using wood blocks for each page, they produced a complete 130-volume set of classics in the 10th century. They also invented the art of movable type printing as early as 1041 A.D., but they had used clay rather than wood or metal. Furthermore, because the Chinese did not have an alphabet, the printing press was not so practical for them, because they had to make a separate mold for every word in their language.

[Asimov's Chronology of the World](#), page 206, says this about the printing invention:

“The Chinese had this notion before the Europeans did, and the news of it may have reached Europe in Mongolian times. The point is, though, that even if the concept was not original with the Europeans, it was

more widely employed by them. This was not because the Europeans were more intelligent or ingenious than the Chinese ... but because the Europeans had the alphabet and the Chinese did not.”

The Mongol invasion of the Middle East in the 1200's brought this idea to the West along with the use of gunpowder. No one knows exactly how Johannes Gutenberg came upon the idea of carving letters that could be put together into words in order to stamp them upon paper. It was simply a further innovation of the Mongol technology.

The Muslims themselves had been the first to learn from the Mongols about the art of printing, but they banned its use in 1493. The Encyclopedia of World History, (Peter Stearns) says on page 127,

“A Muslim ban on printing in Arabic and Turkish remained in effect until the 18th century and kept the new technology from spreading to the Muslim population earlier.”

This ban on printing caused the Ottoman Empire to lose its technological advantage in the world. They have never recovered from this self-inflicted wound. In Europe printing allowed scientific works to be shared among other scientists quickly, and this dramatically increased the pace of scientific thought and invention.

The Book was Little

[Rev. 10:2](#) says that this little book was OPEN. This is a reference to the Bible being opened to the common people through the printed page and through the efforts of men who began to translate the Bible into the common language of the people. These two factors changed history.

Johannes Gutenberg of Mainz, Germany, began building the first wooden press in 1436 using metal movable type. It was completed in 1440. In 1450 he printed the *Constance Mass Book*. He then began working on the Bible itself. The Gutenberg Bible was being printed from 1452 to 1455 even as Constantinople was being besieged by the Ottoman Turks in 1453.

New Translations Open the Book

The fall of Constantinople brought thousands of refugees into Europe. Many of them were Greek-speaking theologians, carrying with them Greek copies of the Scriptures. Suddenly, the Latin Vulgate had competition. Men could now translate the Bible into English directly from the Greek text instead of relying upon the Latin translation.

In 1462 the attack on Mainz by soldiers of the Archbishop of Nassau, forced printers to flee that city. In this manner their printing skills became spread over Europe. By the year 1500 there were over 1000 printing presses in 250 cities of Europe, including 60 in Germany. By that same year over 9 million copies of 30,000 different books had been printed.

In 1466 William Tyndale translated the New Testament directly from the Greek text now available to him. He also translated the Old Testament directly from the original Hebrew into English, and his New Testament was used in The Coverdale Bible in 1536.

Tyndale had said, “I will cause a boy that driveth a plow to know more of the Scriptures than the pope.” Again he asked, “By what right doth the pope forbid God to speak in the English tongue? Why should not the Sermons of the Apostles, preached no doubt in the mother-tongue of those who heard them, be now written in the mother-tongue of those who read them?”

Tyndale was finally burned at the stake. We read in the book, History of the Reformation in the Time of Calvin, by J. H. Merle d'Aubigne,

“In August 1536 Tyndale appeared before the ecclesiastical court. ‘You are charged,’ said his judges, ‘with having infringed the imperial decree which forbids any one to teach that faith alone justifies.’ The accusation

was not without truth. Tyndale's Unjust Mammon had just appeared in London under the title: *Treatise of Justification by Faith Only*. Every man could read in it the crime with which he was charged."

On October 6, 1536 Tyndale died joyfully as a martyr for the Word of God. J. H. Merle d' Aubigne continues,

"The joy of hope filled his heart; yet one painful idea took possession of him. Dying far from his country, abandoned by his king, he felt saddened at the thought of that prince, who had already persecuted so many of God's servants, and who remained obstinately rebellious against that divine light which everywhere shone around him. Tyndale would not have that soul perish through carelessness. His charity buried all the faults of the monarch; he prayed that those sins might be blotted out from before the face of God; he would have saved Henry VIII at any cost. While the executioner was fastening him to the post, the reformer exclaimed in a loud and suppliant voice, 'Lord, open the king of England's eyes!' They were his last words. Instantly afterwards he was strangled, and flames consumed the martyr's body."

The Bible rapidly became an open book. It was no longer merely a priestly book that was closed to the laity. All of this was a direct result of the "strong angel" sent by God to change the course of history.

As we said earlier, The Coverdale Bible in 1536 was Tyndale's translation. It was presented to King Henry VIII to get permission to distribute it in England. Continuing,

"Henry ran over the book: Tyndale's name was not in it, and the dedication to his Majesty was very well written. The king regarding (and not without reason) Holy Scripture as the most powerful engine to destroy the papal system, and believing that this translation would help him to emancipate England from the Romish domination, came to an unexpected resolution: he authorized the sale and the reading of the Bible throughout the kingdom. Inconsistent and whimsical prince! At one and the same time he published and imposed all over his realm the doctrines of Romanism, and circulated without obstacle the Divine Word that overthrew them! We may well say that the blood of a martyr, precious in the eyes of the Supreme King, opened the gates of England to the Holy Scriptures

"For centuries the English people had been waiting for such permission, even from before the time of Wycliff; and accordingly, the Bible circulated rapidly This great event, more important than divorces, treaties, and wars, was the conquest of England by the Reformation Whoever possessed the means bought the book and read it or had it read to him by others. Aged persons learnt their letters in order to study the Holy Scriptures of God. In many places there were meetings for reading; poor people dubbed their savings together and purchased a Bible, and then in some remote corner of the church, they modestly formed a circle and read the Holy Book between them. A crowd of men, women, and young folks, disgusted with the barren pomp of the altars, and with the worship of dumb images, would gather round them to taste the precious promises of the Gospel. God Himself spoke under the arched roofs of those old chapels or time-worn cathedrals, where for generations nothing had been heard but masses and litanies. The people wished, instead of the noisy chants of the priests, to hear the voice of Jesus Christ, of Paul and of John, of Peter and of James. The Christianity of the Apostles reappeared in the Church."

The Coverdale Bible (1536) was followed by the Geneva Bible (1560) and later the King James Bible (1611). Just as important as their publications was the fact that they were "authorized" by the monarchs, so that it was no longer illegal to read the Scriptures. This is what truly "opened" the little book, as prophesied by John.

Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation

While there were important background events that brought about the Protestant Reformation, including the degeneracy of the Roman Popes themselves, the Reformation really began in 1517. Asimov's Chronology of the world, pp. 209–210 says,

“Wyclif and Hus had inveighed against the corruption, venality, and luxury of the Church, and they had been silenced; however, as long as abuses continued, other reformers were sure to arise.

“To raise money, the Church was now selling ‘indulgences;’ that is, documents assuring that dead souls in purgatory would be released if living relatives would only pay the prices set for such indulgences

“An Augustinian monk, Martin Luther (1483–1546), was offended by this rank conversion of spirituality into a money-making device and by various other flaws that he saw in Church administration and behavior. On October 31, 1517, he nailed 95 theses to the church door at Wittenberg in Saxony—the usual way of challenging others to debate with him over the various points of view he was expressing.

“Luther had going for him what previous reformers had had—nationalism. Wyclif had appealed to English nationalists who objected to money forever flowing into the Italian coffers of the Pope. Similarly, Hus appealed to Bohemian nationalism, and now Luther appealed to German nationalism.

“However, Luther had, in addition, something Wyclif and Hus had not had. Luther had the printing press. Wyclif’s and Hus’s views were only broadcast with difficulty, so that a great many people knew little detail about their arguments. Luther, however, had the gift of vigorous and powerful prose that appeared as printed pamphlets. These spread the length and breadth of Germany much faster than they could be suppressed. In no time, everyone was aware of, and debating, the new views.”

Thus, we see how important the printing press was to the success of the Protestant Reformation. On page 213 of the same book, we read about Pope Leo X, who was the Roman Pope during this period of history:

“Leo apparently had no comprehension of the seriousness of the situation and was satisfied with excommunicating Luther. He dismissed the whole thing as just another argument among monks, not understanding the vast change that the printing press had brought to such arguments.”

Leo X excommunicated Martin Luther in January 1520. Luther in turn burned the papal “bull,” as it was called. The next year King Henry VIII of England wrote a book refuting Martin Luther’s views. For this, Leo X awarded him the title, “Defender of the Faith.”

But events in England soon led to a break from Roman Catholicism and the establishment of Protestantism in that nation. Henry VIII wanted a male heir to the throne, but his wife, Catherine of Aragon had given him only one daughter (Mary). He claimed that his lack of a male heir was God’s judgment upon him for marrying his brother’s widow. Thus, in 1527 he applied to the Pope for a divorce.

It was a case of very bad timing. There had been a dispute between the Emperor Charles V and King Francis I of Spain. The pope unwisely made an alliance with the French king during a time when Charles V was in control of Italy.

The commander of the French forces (Charles, duke of Bourbon) fell out of favor with his own king and so turned traitor and joined forces with the Emperor Charles V. He then led his French army (mostly Catholics) into Italy and sacked the city of Rome, taking the pope prisoner. Charles of Bourbon himself was killed in the first battle, but his troops sacked Rome without him. Asimov’s Chronology of the World says on page 213,

“Rome received far worse treatment at the hand of Christian soldiers (some were Lutherans, but most were Catholics) than ever it had received at the hands of Goths and Vandals 11 centuries before.

“The sack of Rome is considered to mark the end of the Italian Renaissance ...”

Thus, Henry VIII appealed for a divorce from Catherine at the time when Pope Clement VII was the prisoner of the Emperor Charles V. The Pope was in no position to grant Henry’s request to divorce Catherine. She was the aunt of Charles V, so he certainly would not allow the pope to grant the divorce.

These events meant that the pope was preoccupied with his very survival at the very time that trouble was brewing in England. Because Henry was not granted the divorce, he divorced her without papal permission and married Anne Boleyn in 1533. Later that same year she gave birth to a daughter, Elizabeth, who eventually became queen.

In 1534 the English Parliament passed the Act of Supremacy, appointing the king and his successors Protector and only Supreme Head of the Church and the Clergy of England. This was the beginning of the Protestant Reformation in England. It was more of an act of state, rather than a true reformation of spiritual ideals.

Nonetheless, for all of its faults, it provided a relatively safe haven for Protestants to develop their ideas and to spread them into the rest of Europe.

The Timing of the Reformation

As for timing, I find these two dates (1517 and 1534) most significant. The Apostle Paul was commissioned on his first missionary journey in 47 A.D. at the beginning of the great famine throughout the Roman Empire mentioned in [Acts 11:28](#) that was prophesied by Agabus. Paul's ministry finally ended with his execution in Rome in 67 A.D., as the result of the Roman persecution which began three years earlier in 64 A.D.

Paul's ministry, which began during a famine in 47 A.D., was when the early Church really began to go beyond the oppressive bounds of Judaism and into the world at large. Though a physical famine ravaged Judea, Paul's gospel brought relief from the spiritual famine of the word ([Amos 8:11](#)).

Three periods of 490 years later is 1517 A.D., when another famine of hearing the Word was upon *Papal* Rome, due to the papal ban on reading the Bible. But among the Protestants, the Word was being translated, printed, and placed in their hands. They hungrily devoured its meat, and so for them, the famine of the Word had ended. In this way 1517 was a prophetic parallel to 47 A.D.

In 64 A.D. the great fire of Rome caused Nero to blame the Christians, when in fact he had set the fire himself. If we add three periods of 490 years to this date, we come to the year 1534, which was not only the date of England's Act of Supremacy, but was also when the Jesuit Order was established by Ignatius Loyola. This soon led to the "counter-reformation," when Rome's Jesuits took the lead in persecuting the breakaway Protestants.

Hence, these two dates, 1517 and 1534 are considered by historians to be the primary dates for the beginnings of the Protestant Reformation. Being 3 x 490 years after Paul's ministry and the start of Roman persecution adds weight to this.

And, of course, the fourth period of 490 years extends from 1517 to 2007 and from 1534 to 2024. It appears that 2007–2024 marks some kind of a *transition* for the church, even as Paul's ministry marked a transition for the church in the first century.

Chapter 2: Eating the Book

As we have already shown, there were two important events that occurred at the end of the second woe. The first was the printing of the Gutenberg Bible in 1452–1455. The second, in 1453, was the fall of Constantinople, which flooded Europe with Greek-speaking refugees and churchmen carrying Greek copies of the Scriptures. Both of these factors opened up the “little book” to the common people and thereby changed the course of history.

On Land and Sea

There were also two other historical events that *protected* the Gospel and allowed the Scriptures to continue to spread among the common people. In [Rev. 10:2](#) we read,

² and he [the “strong angel”] had in his hand a little book which was open. And he placed his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land.

Martin Luther’s 95 Theses (Oct. 31, 1517) and England’s Act of Supremacy (1534) were evidences of the angelic foot being planted upon the land—first on the European mainland and then in England. These events secured the success of the Protestant Reformation by which the little book was opened to the common people.

Yet these events did not go uncontested by the Roman Church. For all his trouble, going through six wives, Henry VIII of England ended up with just one son, Edward VI, who ruled almost seven years (1547–1553). He died at the age of 16 and was succeeded by Mary, his older sister whose mother was Catherine of Aragon.

Mary was a Roman Catholic, and in 1554 she married Philip of Spain, who was also Catholic. Mary attempted to force England back under the Roman yoke, and, as usual, she promoted burning Protestants at the stake. [The Encyclopedia of World History](#), page 285 says,

“About 300 are said to have been burned during this persecution.”

But Queen Elizabeth I came to the throne of England in 1558, and she secured England as a Protestant country by repealing all of the Catholic laws that Mary had enacted earlier. This was the angel’s foot being placed firmly on the land.

Yet there would be one more important attempt thirty years later to bring England back under the Roman yoke.

In 1587 Philip II of Spain began to build a huge armada of ships in order to invade England and force it back under the yoke of Rome. This Spanish Armada of 130 ships set sail for England on July 12, 1588. However, more than half of these ships were destroyed by the English and by storms in the North Sea. [The strong angel had put his foot down on the sea](#). This changed the course of history and kept the Bible an open book that has blessed the lives of millions among the hungry people during the famine of hearing the Word.

Eating the Little Book

For the sake of continuity, we will skip past the seven thunders for now and go directly to [Rev. 10:8–10](#), where John says more about the little book:

⁸ And the voice which I heard from heaven, I heard again speaking with me, saying, Go, take the book which is open in the hand of the angel who stands on the sea and on the land. ⁹ And I went to the angel, telling him to give me the little book. And he said to me, Take it and eat it; and it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey. ¹⁰ And I took the little book out of the angel’s hand and ate it, and it was in my mouth sweet as honey; and when I had eaten it, my stomach was made bitter.

This describes the people in the time of the Reformation who were to “eat” (read) the newly-opened Bible. It was sweet in their mouths, but gave them spiritual heartburn. When they were persecuted by the Roman Church for reading it, it was bitter in their stomachs.

This is quite similar to the experience of the prophet Ezekiel. Ezekiel 2 speaks of the prophet’s call to preach to a rebellious house of Israel. God says in [Ezekiel 2:8–10](#),

⁸ Now you, son of man, listen to what I am speaking to you; do not be rebellious like that rebellious house. Open your mouth and eat what I am giving you. ⁹ Then I looked, behold, a hand was extended to me; and lo, a scroll was in it. ¹⁰ When He spread it out before me, it was written on the front and back; and written on it were lamentations, mourning, and woe.

And so the prophet was told to open his mouth to preach from the scroll, or book. Then the text continues in the next chapter. [Ezekiel 3:1–3](#) says,

¹ Then He said to me, Son of man, eat what you find; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel. ² So I opened my mouth, and He fed me this scroll. ³ And He said to me, Son of man, feed your stomach, and fill your body with this scroll which I am giving you. Then I ate it, and it was sweet as honey in my mouth.

So here we see that Ezekiel was told to “eat” the scroll (book) in order that he might know what to preach to the rebellious house of Israel. One must eat the word of God in order to know the message, because we are what we eat. More than that, we are what we *assimilate*. Many have read the Bible without truly assimilating its meaning. So when we read Scripture, we must understand it in order to become the living word. To assimilate (or digest) the word is to understand it and incorporate it into our being.

The word of God is sweet to eat, but when we open our mouths to teach rebellious people, the word becomes bitter in our stomachs. Hence, when Ezekiel went to preach the word that He had “eaten,” he “*went embittered in the rage of my spirit, and the hand of the Lord was strong on me*” ([Ezekiel 3:14](#)).

Ezekiel was sent to rebellious Israel. John was sent to the rebellious Church of the future that was yet to emerge after his death. What Ezekiel discovered long ago is the same thing that the people of the Reformation discovered after they began to understand the little book that had been opened to them. It was sweet in their mouths, but bitter in their stomachs. Why? Did the word cause indigestion? No. Rather, it brought persecution from the rebellious Roman Church that had banned the reading of the word apart from the explanation of a priest who could interpret the word according to church traditions.

The rebellious Church had rebelled against God by substituting their own traditions for the true word of God. They were guilty of the same thing that the Jewish priests had done with the Old Testament during the time of Christ. [Mark 7:6–9](#) says,

⁶ And He [Jesus] said to them, Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, “This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far away from Me. ⁷ But in vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.” ⁸ Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the traditions of men. ⁹ He was also saying to them, You nicely set aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition.

Jesus was quoting from [Isaiah 29:13](#), where, 700 years earlier, the prophet had pointed out this problem. In Jesus’ day the Jewish Talmudic teachings had re-interpreted the divine law to suit their carnal minds; and later, the Church re-interpreted the New Testament to suit their own carnal minds. In both cases, it was more than a re-interpretation—it was often a case of blatantly overruling the word itself. Jesus said in [Mark 7:13](#), “*thus invalidating the word of God by your tradition which you have handed down.*”

This was the problem that God began to overcome in the 1400's, when He opened the word to the people.

The last verse of Revelation 10 tells us the purpose of God's open book. It is to preach the word. [Rev. 10:11](#) says,

¹¹ And they said to me, "You must prophecy again concerning many peoples and nations and tongues and kings."

This differs from Ezekiel only in the scope of preaching the word. Ezekiel was specifically sent only to the house of Israel that was already in captivity in Assyria ([Ezekiel 3:4-7](#)). These ten tribes of Israel had rebelled against God and refused His law, replacing God's law with "*the statutes of Omri*" ([Micah 6:16](#)). For this reason, God had sent them into captivity.

John, on the other hand, represents the overcomers who are sent to present the word of God to "*many peoples and nations and tongues and kings*." John is the one who took the book and ate it, but he did this on behalf of all the overcomers—particularly on behalf of the generation living after the little book was opened in 1452. In this way, he represented primarily a future generation to whom the prophecy would be most applicable.

And indeed, once the book was opened, and the stage was set in the 1450's, Columbus opened the way to the New World in 1492. Exploration was accompanied by the beginnings of missionary activity from the Roman Church as well as the Protestant churches.

Chapter 3: The Seven Thunders

When the little book was opened, the seven thunders revealed its message. [Rev. 10:3](#) says,

³ and he [the strong angel of verse 1] cried out with a loud voice, as when a lion roars; and when he had cried out, the seven peals of thunder uttered their voices.

The Angel Peniel

The “strong angel” is described in verse 1 as having a face “*like the sun*.” This description identifies him as Peniel, the angel that Jacob wrestled. [Gen. 32:24](#) calls this angel “a man,” but many years later, when Jacob blessed the sons of Joseph, passing down the name “Israel” to them, he identified this “man” as an angel ([Gen. 48:16](#)). So it was an angel that had taken the form of a man, as we so often see in the Bible.

This angel refused to identify himself to Jacob ([Gen. 32:29](#)), but Jacob then named the place after the name of the angel, for he discerned the angel’s name intuitively. It was *Panah-El*, or *Peniel*, “the face (or presence) of God.” When God delivered Israel from Egypt under Moses, it was this same angel that led them, for [Isaiah 63:9](#) speaks of this, saying,

⁹ In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence [*paniym*, the plural of *Panah*] saved them.

Even in traditional Jewish literature, Peniel was said to be the name of this angel. We read this on page 222 of Gustav Davidson’s book, [A Dictionary of Angels](#):

“... in the writings of Moses Botarel, de Abano, Barrett, etc. Peniel is the angel Jehovah, the dark antagonist, the one who wrestled with Jacob.”

These old writers had some strange ideas, of course, and did not really know the true character of Peniel. But they were correct at least in identifying him as the angel that Jacob wrestled in Genesis 32.

At the break of day, Jacob received the angelic blessing and was given the name “Israel,” which means “God rules.” It was a testimony that God was sovereign and was an indication that Jacob had lost the wrestling match. It was in losing, though, that he won, for he then began to truly acknowledge the sovereignty of God.

Jacob then crossed over the river Jabbok as “*the sun rose upon him*” ([Gen. 32:31](#)). He was on his way to a place that he called Succoth ([Gen. 33:17](#)). Succoth is “booths” or “tabernacles” and speaks of the feast of Tabernacles. Hence, in this great historical allegory, we see that Peniel is the angel of the feast of Tabernacles. His blessing is necessary to fulfill that final feast day.

The fulfillment of Tabernacles involves the sun rising upon us. For this reason also, when Jesus was transfigured before the disciples in Matthew 17, verse 2 says,

² And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light.

This is how the strong angel in [Rev. 10:1](#) is described. “*His face was like the sun*.” His immediate job was to open the little book, to open the word to many nations and to break the power of those who would forbid its reading. But ultimately, the job of this angel is to lead people into an understanding of the feast of Tabernacles, so that they may be given their new name “Israel,” and bear witness to the world that God rules.

This is the message of the seven thunders that John was unable to reveal to us while we were yet in the Age of Pentecost. It was not yet time to reveal openly the mysteries of the feast of Tabernacles. That message had to be hidden until a more appropriate time. That time is now.

The Seven Thunders Sealed

[Revelation 10:4](#) says,

⁴ And when the seven peals of thunder had spoken, I was about to write; and I heard a voice from heaven saying, Seal up the things which the seven peals of thunder have spoken, and do not write them.

It was not yet time to reveal these things. As we see so often, most revelations are designed not only to reveal but also to conceal. Revelation is then given progressively over a period of time to those who have ears to hear. In similar fashion, Daniel was given much revelation and yet was told to seal up certain things until the time of the end ([Dan.8:26; 12:9](#)).

When God seals certain revelation, it is only a temporary sealing until an appointed time. In Daniel's case, the revelation was written, but its meaning was sealed. In fact, this is similar to what we see in [Dan. 4:8, 9](#), where King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream that he could not remember. The wise men (magi) were expected to learn the dream by revelation and then to interpret it as well. They were unable to do so, of course, but God revealed it to Daniel and thereby set him apart from the others.

It seems that in [Rev. 10:4](#) God decided to repeat this test of spiritual discernment—and probably for the same reason. God was not merely tantalizing believers with things that would remain beyond their comprehension, for such actions do not befit a God of Love. Rather, He was motivating believers to seek His face and to learn to hear His voice, so that each generation might receive all the revelation that is due in their generation.

So because John was told to refrain from writing the message of the seven thunders, the only way to know their contents is by divine revelation. It is not merely a matter of knowing the *interpretation* of a word, but of knowing the word itself. There has been speculation about this in many books, often with claims of divine revelation. The validity of these claims is for each person to discern for himself.

As for me, I can only add my voice to the many that have already written and spoken. Let the reader discern for himself how well I have heard God's voice in this, for it is not possible to prove scientifically. I can only say that from my own experience, the angel Peniel, who gave the original revelation that was sealed in [Rev. 10:4](#), was "unavailable for comment" for a long time and did not reveal himself (at least, not to me) until the year 1995.

The Angel Peniel Delayed

On October 8, 1995 an angel appeared to me while I was at a conference in North Carolina and spoke only one word—his name. When I noticed him standing quietly in the corner of the room, I was about to ask who he was when he said, "Peniel." I had thought Peniel was the name of a place and had no idea that it was the name of an angel. It took me most of the day to search out this revelation in the Word, for it took me totally by surprise.

Something had happened earlier that morning, unknown to me at the time, across the world. A month after Peniel appeared to me, a missionary couple, Ginny and Russell Reese, met me at a house meeting in Portland, Oregon in order to share their story. They had just gotten back from doing ministry work in Japan and had read my report about the angel Peniel, which I had seen in North Carolina.

They told me that a group of about 40 U.S. marines stationed in Japan had been praying for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and wanted to hold special meetings on the military base. However, the chaplain refused to allow this. So they prayed and fasted, but the chaplain would not budge. So after the Sunday morning church meeting on October 8, 1995, these marines went out to the sea wall, where they began to praise and worship God.

What they told me next astounded me, and so I asked them to write it down for me. Here is what they wrote:

“Twakuni, Japan, [I] had fasted from Oct. 1–7. On Oct. 8th we met on the sea wall and began worshipping and praising God. Then we went into prayer, asking God what was the dark power we were seeing over the marine base. An audible voice that all 40 heard spoke, ‘It’s name is Evil Report.’ We went into spiritual warfare, prayer, and once again, we all heard the voice asking: ‘Whose report do you believe?’ We began to worship and praise again, declaring, ‘We believe the report of the Lord!’

“God spoke again and said, ‘Blessed is he who believes all that the Lord has spoken will come to pass!’ We then saw the dark power over the base broken.”

When I received this report and correlated it with the appearance of the angel Peniel, I realized that this angel had been released by those 40 U.S. Marines at a base in Japan, the “land of the rising sun.” [Gen. 32:31](#) tells us that after Jacob had wrestled with the angel ...

³¹ Now the sun rose upon him just as he crossed over Penuel, and he was limping on his thigh.

In a strange way, this verse provided a hidden clue that connected Penuel, the place name, with Japan, the land of the rising sun. When Peniel revealed himself a few hours later as the sun rose over North Carolina, I realized that I had to study the Scriptures to understand the revelation that the angel was revealing.

The big clue came to me through [Isaiah 63:9–11](#) in the prophet’s discussion of Israel’s rebellion in the time of Moses.

⁹ In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence [*paniym*] saved them; in His love and in His mercy He redeemed them; and He lifted them and carried them all the days of old. ¹⁰ But they rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit; therefore, He turned Himself to become their enemy; He fought against them. ¹¹ Then His people remembered the days of old, of Moses

This told me that the angel of His presence, or face (*paniym*) was the angel that had led them out of Egypt in the pillar of fire and the pillar of cloud ([Exodus 14:19](#)). *Panah-El*, or Peniel, is the angel of God’s personal presence/face and represents “the face of God.”

This angel had led Israel until the great rebellion when they worshiped the golden calf in Exodus 32. At that point God told Moses that He would not personally lead the people into the Promised Land, but rather that He would “*send an angel before you*” ([Exodus 33:2](#)). But Israel already had an angel leading them in the pillar of fire/cloud, as we have seen. So this was a substitute angel, one who had a different calling and purpose.

Peniel is the Angel of Tabernacles. If the people had not revolted, Peniel would have led Israel into Canaan from their southern camp at Kadesh-barnea in the wilderness of Paran ([Num. 13:26](#)). They might have entered the land without crossing the Jordan (i.e., through death and resurrection). However, the golden calf experience brought judgment against the nation and made this impossible.

The substitute angel was “*Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people*” ([Dan. 12:1](#)). Michael is the angel of death and resurrection ([Dan. 12:2](#)). Both angels have the power to bring us into the Promised Land, but by different paths.

Peniel withdrew until the end of the age, forcing every generation except the last to enter the Promised Land through death and resurrection. Peniel’s power is for “*we who are alive and remain*” ([1 Thess. 4:17](#)), for, as Paul says in [1 Cor. 15:51](#), “*we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.*” It is only the last generation of believers who have the potential of entering the Promised Land apart from death and resurrection. The release of Peniel by those 40 U.S. marines in Japan made this possible, for Peniel has now been re-commissioned.

The rebellion of the “*Church in the wilderness*” ([Acts 7:38](#)) prevented Israel from fulfilling the feast of Tabernacles. And so God told Moses that this angel of His personal presence would not lead them into the land, but rather, they would be led by a different angel. When the people believed the evil report of the ten spies in [Num. 13:32](#), they fully lost the opportunity to enter the Promised Land at Tabernacles. Instead, they had to wait another 38 years and then enter the land at the time of Passover—that is, through death and resurrection.

Likewise, in the Age of Pentecost, the Church again wandered in their own wilderness for 40 Jubilees (1,960 years from 33 to 1993 A.D.). Then came the time to move toward the fulfillment of the feast of Tabernacles. Two years later, the U.S. Marines in Japan broke the curse of the Evil Report when, after being asked “*Which report do you believe?*” they proclaimed, “We believe the report of the Lord!” that is, *the good report*. This ended the long 70-Jubilee delay. The angel Peniel then began to prepare the overcomers to fulfill this feast and lead us into the Promised Land of Tabernacles.

Even so, this “strong angel” has already been active, beginning with the printing of the Bible in the 1450’s. His ultimate purpose (calling) is in regard to the manifestation of the sons of God. It is to usher in the next age, during which time the word of God will go forth in an increased manner until the whole world sees who Christ is—through His sons, primarily.

[Revelation 10:5](#), [6](#) says,

⁵ And the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land lifted up his right hand to heaven, ⁶ and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things in it, and the earth and the things in it, and the sea and the things in it, that there shall be delay no longer.

The King James version mistranslates this, “*that there shall be time no longer.*” But *time* is not being eradicated. Rather, the rebellious Church had delayed the fulfillment of the feast of Tabernacles for 1,400 years, even as the Church in the wilderness under Moses had delayed their entry into the Promised Land by their rebellious hearts.

Now, the angel was about to break this rebellion in the Church, so that the delay of God’s will could be ended.

Unsealing the Seven Thunders

The seven thunders were revealed (at least potentially) by the opening of the little book, a *biblaridion*, which is the diminutive of *biblos*. It is where we get the word Bible. The seven thunders were revealed by Peniel once the word of God was made available to the people. However, understanding the message of Scripture is another matter. Understanding would come incrementally over the next few centuries until the recommissioning of Peniel in the last generation.

As revealed to me, these are the seven thunders, along with my explanation.

1. **The Way into the Holiest.** This is the decree to begin to break the power of the corrupted Church system, because the way into the Holiest was delayed as long as that system held sway ([Heb. 9:8](#)).
2. **The Image of the Beast.** The religious, political, and economic governments of man, based on the mortal image of Adam, are coming under judgment in order to set the people free.
3. **The Manifested Sons.** This is the coming of Christ *in His saints* ([2 Thess. 1:10](#)), who, like Moses, come off the mount with the new tables of the law on their hearts.
4. **Transfiguration.** Like Jesus in [Matthew 17:2](#), the Sons of God will house His glory in immortal bodies. This is the purpose of the feast of Tabernacles.
5. **Authority of the Sons.** God specifically gave me [John 14:14](#), “*If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.*”

6. **The Law taught to all nations.** [Micah 4:1–4](#). The overcoming Sons of God are the administrators of the Kingdom on the earth, the teachers and final interpreters of the law by the mind of God. [Deut. 33:2, 3](#) says “*From His right hand went a fiery law*” and “*all His saints are in Thy hand*.” The law is the lake of fire and also represents His character ([Deut.4:24](#)). The fire is in the hand of God, and His saints are also in His hand. That is, they will manifest His character and actually administer the corrective judgments of God, called “the lake of fire.”
7. **Division: Separating the Disobedient from Obedient.** These are being divided even now, but yet this division will culminate in the final age at the Great White Throne in Revelation 20. New Jerusalem will fully manifest, but there are still many who must be subdued to Christ ([Rev. 22:11](#)). Hence, a division between the true believers and the disobedient until the Creation Jubilee, when all men are set free at the end of time.

As I said earlier, there is usually no way to prove divine revelation, except by circumstantial evidence that is usually subjective in nature. For this reason, I do not normally share such things, preferring to teach directly from the Scripture. But since John himself was unable to record any of the seven thunders, there was no way to know about it except by divine revelation. And so I ask our readers to bear with me in this matter.

Chapter 4: The Book Turns Bitter

Chapter 10 of Revelation prophesies of the strong angel giving to John an open book, which he was to “eat” so that he could prophesy and preach it to all nations. [Rev. 10:10](#), [11](#) says,

¹⁰ And I took the little book out of the angel’s hand and ate it, and it was in my mouth sweet as honey; and when I had eaten it, my stomach was made bitter. ¹¹ And they said to me, “You must prophesy again concerning many peoples and nations and tongues and kings.”

Without the printing press, this book (*biblos*, or Bible) would not have been “little.” Without faithful men translating it into the common language of the people, few could “eat” its contents. When John ate the book, he did so as a representative of the church and the overcomers alike—all who would go forth as missionaries of the word. John’s very act of eating the book was an obedient act of faith whose consequences, as with Abraham before him, would affect the history of the world.

The opening of the Bible to the common people brought about the Protestant Reformation, as men began to read the Word and see that it differed substantially from what was being taught and practiced in the Roman Church. In fact, it contributed to the rise in the literacy rate itself, for men were now motivated to teach their children to read so that they might study the Word of God that was now readily available to the public.

The sweetness of the word, however, was followed by bitterness in the stomach, as the Roman church opposed the word being distributed among the common people. Rome wanted a monopoly on the word, so that people only heard those portions that seemed to support its authority and teaching. But the word was soon being read by common people everywhere, and it was not long before they saw the contradictions between the word and church teaching.

The Inquisitions

Recall that all of this Kingdom history was outlined in the earlier prophecies of the seven churches. The fall of Constantinople (1453) and the use of the printing press (1452) fell just 65 years before the end of the Thyatira church era (529–1517). Thyatira was the Jezebel church, which persecuted the prophets and the saints for a thousand years.

In fact, we have not even taken the time to discuss the various Inquisitions, which began in 1184 A.D. when Pope Lucius III issued his papal bull, *Ad Abolendam*. Up to that time the usual punishment for “heresy” was the death penalty. (This has been called the Episcopal Inquisition to contrast it with the Papal Inquisition that began in 1229.)

The Inquisitions made torture a pious act, supposedly to force heretics to recant “for their own good,” submit to Rome’s official creed, and thereby “save” their souls. In 1229 such torture was again authorized by the pope, and confirmed on May 15, 1252 by Pope Innocent IV in his papal bull, *Ad Extirpanda*.

[Dan. 7:21](#) prophesied that the “little horn” would wage war on the saints and actually overpower them until the transfer of authority occurred at the end of the beast’s allotted time to rule. Likewise, [Daniel 12:10](#) spoke of a time where the saints would be refined and purified by persecution. While this war and persecution has occurred from time to time since the time of Abel, it reached a crescendo in the inquisitions, particularly in the Spanish Inquisition (1478–1834).

The Spanish Inquisition began in the reign of Queen Isabella I of Spain and, ironically, ended with Isabella II in 1834. At first, Pope Sixtus IV did not want to authorize the Spanish Inquisition, but the queen’s husband, Ferdinand (Fernando) threatened to withdraw military support for the war in which the city of Constantinople had recently fallen (1453).

“The Monarchs’ first requests to Pope Sixtus IV to re-introduce the Inquisition were refused – the Roman authorities were apparently concerned about papal authority being weakened – but the ever resourceful

Fernando threatened to withdraw his military support for the Papal conflict with the Turks and so permission was granted.”

<http://www.spanish-fiestas.com/history/inquisition/>

At first, Jews were persecuted, resulting in 250,000 Jews leaving Spain. Jews had prospered under Muslim rule, but both Muslims and Jews were expelled from Spain in 1492. In the next century the new Protestant movement became the main object of church persecution. The Inquisitions were proofs that the spirit of Ishmael, who persecuted Isaac, was being carried on not only by Islam but by the church.

The Role of the Philadelphia Church

The Jezebel church of Thyatira ended in 1517 as Martin Luther nailed his famous “95 Theses” on the church door at Wittenberg. These were his challenges to debate church doctrines and practices. His “protest” over the church’s love of money and its abuse of authority sparked the Protestant movement. It also marked the transition into the Sardis church era, the “precious stone” cut out of the Roman church.

All of this coincided with the early spread of the Scriptures that were being translated, printed, and put into the hands of the common people.

If the Sardis era focused mainly upon the shift in thinking brought about by the Scriptures, it was the next church, that of Philadelphia beginning in 1776 that began the missionary movement to bring the Scriptures to the rest of the world. Here is where we see the greatest connection between the church and the “strong angel” (that is, Peniel) who opened the little book.

The Philadelphia church was said to have a little strength and an open door ([Rev. 3:7, 8](#)). It was the Hezekiah church, and Hezekiah, who had been given the key of David and the open door in [Isaiah 22:22](#) had a name that means “strength of Yah.”

So we see Peniel’s background role in establishing the work of the Philadelphia church in feeding the word of God to all nations. As we will see later, Peniel was to be assisted by the Angel of Hastening Hope to bring the gospel of the Kingdom to all parts of the earth. According to my own personal revelation, this is the angel mentioned in [Rev. 14:6](#),

⁶ And I saw another angel flying in midheaven, having an eternal gospel to preach to those who live on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people.

Meanwhile, however, as the little book began to open, and as men began to eat the word of God, it was inevitable that opposition should rise up against such feasting. After all, [Amos 8:11](#) had prophesied of a famine of the word, which had indeed occurred during the entire Thyatira church era. Although this famine was broken by the open book, it has continued in other ways to the present time.

It has been said (in the 1970’s) that there is an average of six Bibles for every household in the United States. Yet there is very little understanding in spite of this. It appears that a spirit of stupor has settled upon the church as a whole, even as it had come upon Israel in ancient times. Paul says in [Rom. 11:7, 8](#),

⁷ What then? That which Israel is seeking for, it has not obtained, but those who were chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened; ⁸ just as it is written, “God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes to see not and ears to hear not, down to this very day.”

In other words, just because someone reads the Bible does mean that he hears the word. Neither does memorizing Scripture necessarily give a person either revelation or even understanding. Traditions of men are too easily substituted for the word itself, giving men the illusion of understanding while, in fact, they invalidate the word by their traditions ([Matt. 15:6](#)). This has been the problem since the beginning.

Opposition to the Word

During the Philadelphia era, many great missionary societies were established in the 1790's and into the 1800's. In 1792 the Baptist Missionary Society was established. Three years later the London Missionary Society was founded. In 1797 came the Wesleyan Missionary Society. In 1800 came the Anglican Church Missionary Society. In 1804 came the British and Foreign Bible Society. In 1806 came the Hibernian Bible Society of Ireland. In 1816 came the American Bible Society. In 1861 came the National Bible Society of Scotland.

This began the great missionary movements of the next 200 years, which spread the word of God into all parts of the world. This fulfilled the Word to the Church of Philadelphia, “Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it” ([Rev. 3:8](#)). He that had the key of David had opened a new door ([Rev. 3:7](#)), giving Christians of all denominations the opportunity to spread the Gospel to all parts of the world.

Up to that time, only Roman Catholicism had had such opportunity, but they had spread their message primarily through conquest, rather than by love. Furthermore, they spread religion with very little understanding of the word. Their focus was to put men in submission to the pope, rather than to Christ, for they could see no difference. They did not comprehend—and still do not—the story of King Saul and how the people had rejected the rule of God, as we read in [1 Sam. 8:7](#).

Pope Leo XII (1823–1835) wrote of the Roman church’s attempt to stop the spread of Scripture. His words are recorded in Cormanin’s Complete History of the Popes, Vol. II, pp. 426–427,

“There is a sect, my brethren, who arrogating wrongfully to themselves the name of philosophy, have rekindled from their ashes the dispersed phalanxes of errors. This sect, covered externally by the flattering appearances of piety and liberality, professes toleration, or rather indifference, and interferes not only with civil affairs, but even with those of religion; teaching that God has given entire freedom to every man, so that each one can, without endangering his safety, embrace and adopt the sect or opinion which suits his private judgment.... This doctrine, though seducing and sensible in appearance, is profoundly absurd; and I cannot warn you too much against the impiety of these maniacs...”

“What shall I say more? The iniquity of the enemies of the Holy See is so increased, that besides the deluge of pernicious books with which they inundate Europe, it goes so far as to turn the religion of the holy scriptures to detriment. A society, commonly called the Bible Society, spreads itself audaciously over the whole earth, and in contempt of the traditions of the holy fathers, in opposition to the celebrated decree of the council of Trent, which prohibits the holy scriptures from being made common, it publishes translations of them in all the languages of the world. Several of our predecessors have made laws to turn aside this scourge; and we also, in order to acquit ourselves of our pastoral duty, urge the shepherds to remove their flocks carefully from these mortal pasturages.... Let God arise: let him repress, confound, annihilate this unbridled license of speaking, writings, and publishing—.”

This ban on Bible translations remained in effect at least until the Roman Church officially gave up trying to suppress the Scriptures in the 1890's. Even so, it was not until Vatican II in the early 1960's that the Roman Church stopped trying to prevent Catholics from reading the Bible. The Church then simply stopped talking about those earlier “infallible” decrees banning the Scriptures and pretended that they had always advocated the study of the word. The Roman Church could not close this open door that God had opened, so they joined the crowd and pretended that the door had never been locked.

Chapter 5: The Temple

The ninth chapter of Revelation covers the rise of Islam from 612–1453, along with the fall of the Constantinople and the Eastern Roman Empire. These are the first two “woes” of [Rev. 8:13](#). The third woe, which is the seventh trumpet, does not begin until [Rev. 11:15](#). Hence, the historical events described in the tenth chapter of Revelation tell us of more positive works that God was doing to build His Kingdom during the time of the second woe.

In order to establish His Kingdom, the citizens of that Kingdom must be prepared through an understanding of the word, that is, by opening the little book. The Kingdom must be established with divine revelation and understanding of His ways, that is, His laws. Indeed, men did begin to study the divine law.

Men like John Calvin in Switzerland and John Knox in Scotland searched the Scriptures to learn how to implement the laws of the Kingdom.

Calvin’s “Geneva Experiment” was followed by Knox’s writings that had a great influence on the laws in the American colonies. Their understanding was not complete, for without a clear understanding of the difference between the Old and New Covenants, it was hardly possible to implement the laws of God with the mind of Christ. For this reason, in 1553 Calvin sentenced his opponent, Michael Servetus, to be burned at the stake for heresy, in accordance with the value system that he had learned in his earlier life in the Roman church.

In spite of such serious errors in understanding, the open book gave many the opportunity to learn the ways of God, rather than relying on the ways of the church. Moreover, it gave them the choice of placing their faith in Christ or in the church. Yet the revelation of the word would come slowly, and meanwhile, the spirit of Saul (rule by men) continued.

When men lost faith in the Roman church, most of them simply transferred their allegiance to a new denomination which they hoped would be “the true church.” While these new denominations may have made some improvements (“reforms”) in doctrine or in church practice, they were, nonetheless, still ruled by men.

Temple Construction

Although understanding would come progressively, the gospel—to the extent that it was understood—began to spread to “*many peoples and nations and tongues and kings*” ([Rev. 10:11](#)). As knowledge of the word increased, the new Temple of God began to take shape. This, then, is the first topic of the eleventh chapter of Revelation.

[1 Peter 2:4](#), [5](#) says,

⁴ And coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected by men, but choice and precious in the sight of God, ⁵ you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Christ is the “*living stone*,” and we, as believers are “*living stones*” as well. Peter goes on to say that the main Stone, Jesus Christ, is the “*precious corner stone*” ([1 Peter 2:6](#)), whereas we ourselves are the other stones being shaped and prepared to be placed in the walls of this new Temple. Paul spoke of this as well in [Eph. 2:20–22](#). This spiritual temple, constructed out of “*living stones*,” is the temple prophesied by Ezekiel and Haggai, whether they understood it or not. The shekinah had lifted from the first temple in [Ezekiel 11:23](#), and [Jer. 7:12–14](#) decreed that it would be “as Shiloh,” never again to return either to Shiloh or to Jerusalem.

This was why the second temple, when completed in the time of Zerubbabel, was not glorified by the presence of God in the way that Solomon’s temple had been glorified. The decree of God forbade it. As with Shiloh, from which place the glory had first departed ([1 Sam. 4:20, 21, 22](#)), God had written *Ichabod* on the earthly Jerusalem as well. The glory, then, did not return until the day of Pentecost, when it fell, not upon the people at Herod’s temple, but upon the

disciples in the upper room. These disciples were the first “stones” of the new temple being built upon the foundation of Christ.

The manner of building this new Temple was prefigured in the construction of Solomon’s temple. We read in [1 Kings 6:7](#),

⁷ And the house, while it was being built, was built of stone prepared at the quarry; and there was neither hammer nor axe nor any iron tool heard in the house while it was being built.

The old temple was built of physical stones, which were eventually torn down; but the new Temple is of living stones which will endure forever. The stones of Solomon’s temple were quarried from a mountain and shaped off site. The reason is because the law in [Exodus 20:25](#) says,

²⁵ And if you make an altar of stone for Me, you shall not build it of cut stones, for if you wield your tool on it, you will profane it.

In his wisdom, Solomon applied this law to the temple itself, which is a greater “*altar of stone*.” It was necessary to shape the stones with iron tools, but the work was done offsite so that the sound would not be heard at the temple site itself. This unique application of the law was revealed by God, and it prophesied of things to come.

The living stones in the True Temple were shaped off-site by the iron kingdom of Rome, mostly through persecution. This continued throughout the era of the “little horn,” which was the extension of the iron kingdom. Recall that the little horn was to wage war with the saints until the transfer of authority to the saints of the Most High. All of this opposition and persecution helped to shape the living stones so that they might fit smoothly one upon the other in true unity with Christ.

The true altar of God is not really made of physical stones either. The heart is the true altar, and if we try to shape our own heart by carnal methods, we will only pollute it. The law allowed only naturally-shaped stones—that is, stones shaped over time by God Himself.

This teaches us that only the Holy Spirit can change the heart. We may regulate our behavior, but only God is capable of changing one’s heart.

The church, by its coercion and persecution, tried to shape men’s hearts by the iron tools at its disposal, but all they did was to pollute the hearts of men with warped ideas about the mind of Christ. Yet even this was used by God to accomplish a higher purpose in the big picture of the overall Temple.

The manner in which Solomon’s artificers used iron tools to shape the stones seemed to violate the law, but yet it did not. So also, when God shaped the living stones using the tools of the iron kingdom, this too was acceptable in the divine plan (*boulema*), even though it was a great sin in regard to the will (*thelema*) of God.

Measuring the Temple

[Revelation 11:1](#), [2](#) says,

¹ And there was given me a measuring rod like a staff [*kalamos*, “reed”]; and someone said, “Rise and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and those who worship in it. ² And leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the nations; and they will tread under foot the holy city for forty-two months.”

To measure something is to understand or comprehend something prophetically, especially in terms of time. Distance and time are both measured by numbers according to an established standard of measure. In Scripture, distance is measured in cubits, handbreadths, and reeds. Time is measured in days, weeks, years, and Jubilees in Sabbatical

increments (sevens). Distance and time often correlate in prophecy, because distance often represents time (usually years).

For example, when Israel crossed the Jordan into the Promised Land, priests were to carry the Ark into the midst of the river, and the people were to follow *two thousand cubits* behind the Ark ([Joshua 3:4](#)). The Ark represents Christ, who was baptized at that very spot in the Jordan, and the people were to enter the Kingdom *two thousand years* later. This is a simple example of how the distance of two thousand cubits represented a time of two thousand years.

In Revelation 11, John gives us the key by which we are to correlate the measurement of the temple with the time of its fulfillment. The standard of measure used here is a reed. A reed was a “staff” or stick measuring 42 handbreadths. This length, in turn, was six sacred cubits, each being seven handbreadths in length.

So in [Ezekiel 41:8](#), when the prophet was measuring the temple envisioned in his day, he spoke of “*a full reed of six great cubits*” (KJV). The temple was being measured in sacred cubits, which was actually one handbreadth longer than a regular cubit. The prophet makes mention of this in [Ezekiel 43:13](#), “*And these are the measurements of the altar by cubits (the cubit being a cubit and a handbreadth)*.” He was informing us that the sacred cubit was equal to the length of a regular cubit plus an extra handbreadth.

The reed was the common denominator of both the sacred and the regular cubit. At 42 handbreadths, a reed was six *sacred* cubits or seven *regular* cubits. Hence, a reed was a handy tool for measuring things in those days.

John, who no doubt had used these tools of measurement in his day, gives us the correlation of distance and time in [Rev. 11:1, 2](#). A reed is equal to forty-two months. Hence, a handbreadth is equal to one month in prophecy. And because a prophetic month is, in turn, thirty days—and a day can equal a year—we can also say that a handbreadth may be either one month or thirty years.

This, then, is how we must understand the measuring of this spiritual Temple that God is building out of living stones. It is confusing for those of us who use meters or yards and are unfamiliar with biblical measurement systems. However, if we hope to understand this aspect of Scripture—and especially prophecy—we must take the time to learn these biblical measures.

Chapter 6: Measuring the Two Temples

The key given to us in [Rev. 11:1, 2](#) is the fact that a reed of 42 handbreadths is equal to 42 months of time. That means each handbreadth is the equivalent of one month.

What, then, are the two kinds of cubits? It is plain that a sacred cubit of seven handbreadths represents seven months, while a regular cubit, being only six handbreadths, represents just six months of time.

It takes seven months to complete all of the feast days from Passover to the feast of Tabernacles. Hence, a sacred cubit, which is used to measure the temple and all spiritual things, always encompasses the feast of Tabernacles. On the other hand, the regular cubit, used by the world for ordinary life, portrays ignorance of the feasts of the seventh month: Trumpets, Atonement, and Tabernacles.

In this seemingly insignificant (and confusing) difference between the two cubits, then, we see that all teaching, prophecy, and spiritual growth—anything that measures spiritual things—must include or acknowledge the feasts of the seventh month. Those feasts are part of God’s standard of measure. Without them, a person is “regular” or “ordinary,” even if they have experienced the justification of Passover and the infilling of the Holy Spirit of Pentecost.

The reed that is used to measure the temple in [Rev. 11:1](#) is defined specifically in [Ezekiel 40:5](#), which says, “*a measuring reed of six cubits long by the cubit and an hand breadth*” (KJV). That is, a reed is “*six great cubits*” ([Ezekiel 41:8 KJV](#)) or “*six long cubits*” (NASB).

The Timing of Ezekiel’s Temple Revelation

In order to understand the instruction given to John to measure the temple, we must compare it with the temple measurement shown earlier to Ezekiel. Ezekiel’s revelation of the temple was imparted to him on the 17th Jubilee of Israel since they had crossed the Jordan into the Promised Land under Joshua.

As I showed in [Secrets of Time](#), Israel was supposed to enter the Promised Land at the feast of Tabernacles in the year 2450 (years from Adam). This was the 50th Jubilee from Adam, a Jubilee of Jubilees (50 x 49). However, because the people believed the evil report of the ten spies, their entrance was delayed another 38½ years. So instead, they crossed the Jordan at the time of Passover in the year 2488.

If they had entered the land in the year of Jubilee, their Sabbath years and jubilees would have aligned with the Creation Jubilee Calendar. However, because they were 38 years late, their Sabbath years and jubilees were dated from their Jordan crossing but did not overlay with the Creation Jubilee Calendar.

Samaria, the capital of Israel, fell to the Assyrians in 721 B.C. This date was Israel’s 14th Jubilee (the year 3174) since their Jordan crossing. A century later, Judah fell to Babylon in 604 B.C., but Ezekiel dates his prophecies according to the year of King Jehoiachin’s exile ([Ezekiel 1:1, 2](#)). Jehoiachin was taken captive to Babylon in the year 597 B.C. Ezekiel began to prophesy in the fifth year of his exile, that is, the year 592, which (he says in verse 1) is also “*the thirtieth year.*” That is, the thirtieth year of the 17th Jubilee cycle was the fifth year of Jehoiachin’s exile.

This is the key to understanding the chronology of that time. The prophecy of the temple came to Ezekiel twenty years later “*in the twenty-fifth year of our exile*” ([Ezekiel 40:1](#)), which would have been the 50th year (30 + 20) after completing that Jubilee cycle—that is, it was their 17th Jubilee year.

Furthermore, Ezekiel dates his temple revelation as being “*at the beginning of the year, on the tenth of the month.*” The beginning of the Hebrew year was in Tishri, the seventh month on their calendar. Hence, this revelation was given on the Day of Atonement, or, in this case, the day that the trumpet should have been blown to signal the start of the Jubilee year.

The prophet tells us that this 17th Jubilee (573–572 B.C.) was the 25th year of captivity, as well as the 14th year since the fall of Jerusalem in 586. So Ezekiel received his revelation on the tenth day of the seventh month in September 573 B.C. (the year 3322 from Adam). By this time the temple had been destroyed, and a second temple would not be completed until March 515 B.C.

The temple was completed in the year 3380 from Adam, and September of that year—the start of the new Hebrew year—was the 69th Jubilee on the Creation Jubilee Calendar dating from Adam. This was when Haggai prophesied on the seventh day of the feast of Tabernacles ([Haggai 2:1](#)), suggesting that perhaps that temple would be glorified by the presence of God the following day, even as Solomon's temple had been glorified on the eighth day of Tabernacles a few centuries earlier.

The glory did not come to that temple, of course, because *Ichabod* had already been pronounced upon that place as had occurred even earlier at Shiloh. The glory would be reserved for a greater temple made of living stones.

Yet all of this gives us the context of Ezekiel's temple revelation on the 17th Jubilee from Israel's Jordan crossing.

The Measurement of Ezekiel's Temple

In [Rev. 11:1](#), John was given a reed and told to “*measure the temple of God, and the altar, and those who worship in it.*” The temple and altar cannot be separated from “*those who worship in it.*” The fact that the temple can be measured shows that it was a limited size. By extension, it indicates that it included only a limited number of worshipers.

By contrast, the outer court was not to be measured, “*for it has been given to the nations.*” This implies that “the nations” were not true worshipers, and so they could not be measured by the divine standard (sacred cubit). For this reason, they were in need of the light of the word from the two lampstands which represented the two witnesses in [Rev. 11:3, 4](#). We will say more about this later.

The measurement of Ezekiel's temple is the same as in Solomon's temple. The Holy Place was 40 x 20 cubits ([Ezekiel 41:2](#)), and the Most Holy Place was 20 x 20 cubits ([Ezekiel 41:4](#)). If we convert these figures to handbreadths, the Holy Place was 280 x 140 handbreadths, covering an area of 39,200 square handbreadths. This number is 800 x 49, so we see that its spiritual measurement is based upon the truth of the Jubilee (49). Also, because “Lord” is *kurios* in Greek, having a numeric value of 800, we see that the Holy Place is measured in terms of Christ's Lordship (dominion) and the Jubilee.

As for the Most Holy Place, which is half the size of the Holy Place, 20 x 20 cubits is 140 x 140 handbreadths, covering an area of 19,600 square handbreadths. This number is 400 x 49, again revealing the Jubilee but linking it to the cross. The *tav*, which is the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet, carries a numeric value of 400, and it was originally written in the shape of a cross. If you take a cube, such as the Most Holy Place, and collapse its walls, and unfold the top (ceiling) with one of the sides, the result is a cross shaped by the walls and the ceiling.

Ezekiel's temple used the sacred (long) cubit, whereas Solomon's temple was measured “*in cubits according to the old standard*” ([2 Chron. 3:3](#)). Hence, we see a progressive pattern from fleshly to spiritual. Solomon's temple was built according to the six-handbreadth cubit, while the temples of both Ezekiel and John were measured by the seven-handbreadth cubit.

Both temples measured 60 x 20 cubits, but Solomon's temple was somewhat smaller. Solomon's temple was measured in “old standard” cubits of 19.8 inches each, so the perimeter of the temple (160 cubits) was 3168 inches. This is also the numeric value of *Lord* (800) *Jesus* (888) *Christ* (1480) in Greek. (800 + 888 + 1480 = 3168) Hence, even by using the “old standard” length of cubit, Solomon's temple was a revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ezekiel's temple, however, was measured by the longer cubit of 23.1 inches. (If 19.8 inches is six handbreadths, then each handbreadth measured 3.3 inches, which, added to 19.8 is 23.1.) The perimeter of Ezekiel's temple measures 160 long cubits, which is 3,696 inches. This figure is 528 x 7.

The Hebrew word for *inheritance* as used in [Num. 34:15](#) is *nachalam* (????). It has a numeric value of 528. Also, “the key” of David, mentioned in [Isaiah 22:22](#) is *maphteach* (????), which has a numeric value of 528.

David’s name is based on the word “love.” Hence, the key of David ([Rev. 3:7](#)), which opens the door for the church of Philadelphia (“City of Brotherly Love”) is LOVE. God is love, and in order to receive the inheritance as co-heirs with Christ, one must be like Him—motivated by love. This not only opens the door to the treasury house of the temple, but such a person is made a pillar in the temple ([Rev. 3:12](#)). [Isaiah 22:23](#) says “*he will become a throne of glory to his father’s house.*”

So we see that the measure of Solomon’s earthly temple was an expression of Jesus Christ, who came to earth to manifest the glory of God in flesh, but the measure of the spiritual temple in Ezekiel and in the book of Revelation speaks of the key of David giving us access to our Father’s house (temple) as our inheritance.

Measuring the Temple Grounds and the City

[Ezekiel 41:13, 14](#) gives us the measurement of the temple grounds, saying,

¹³ Then he measured the temple, a hundred cubits long; the separate area with the building and its walls were also a hundred cubits long. ¹⁴ Also the width of the front of the temple and that of the separate areas along the east side totaled a hundred cubits.

In other words, the temple grounds were 100 x 100 cubits. This is 10,000 square cubits, or 490,000 square handbreadths. (100 cubits times 7 handbreadths is 700 handbreadths long and 700 handbreadths wide. 700 x 700 is 490,000.)

We may quickly recognize that 490,000 is 49 x 10,000, so it too is built upon the measure of the Jubilee.

Likewise, the measurement of the city itself (i.e., the walls) is said to be 500 reeds on each side ([Ezekiel 42:16, 17, 18, 19, 20](#)). The walls were designed “*to divide between the holy and the profane*” ([Ezekiel 42:20](#)). The purpose of the New Jerusalem wall was not to keep people out, but to channel them through the proper gates (doors). Jesus said “*I am the door*” ([John 10:9](#)), and that “*he who does not enter by the door... but climbs up some other way, he is a thief and a robber*” ([John 10:1](#)).

In other words, the “holy” ones who gain access to the city are those who come in through the Door (Christ). All others remain “profane” until they come to Christ. The wall, which is the law (boundary), separates the two until such time that every knee bows and every tongue confesses Him as Lord ([Isaiah 45:23, 24](#); [Phil. 2:10, 11](#)).

So each wall in this foursquare “city” is said to be 500 reeds in length, or 3,500 cubits, or 21,000 handbreadths. None of these are perfectly divisible by 49, but when we calculate the area of the city enclosed by the four walls, it is 250,000 square reeds, or 12,250,000 square cubits (250,000 x 49). If we calculate the area of the City in square handbreadths, it is 600,250,000 h², and this is 12,250,000 x 49 as well.

Hence, we see that all of the dimensions of the New Jerusalem, the temple grounds, and the temple itself are built upon the basic unit of 49, which is the Jubilee number. That in turn is built upon the perfect number Seven.

This is the temple that John saw as well. It is not to be interpreted in terms of a physical temple (or city) as in the days of Solomon. We know this by the fact that two different cubits were used, one ordinary and the other sacred, in building the two houses.

Chapter 7: The Two Cities

We have shown that the spiritual maturity of “*those who worship*” ([Rev. 11:1](#)) in the temple of God is in terms of Sabbaths, Jubilees, and feast days. In the “old standard” cubit that was used to measure the temple of Solomon, the people were measured by their willingness to keep these days in a *physical* way. But the great cubit that is used to measure the spiritual temple of Ezekiel and Revelation is the measurement of the heart and one’s relationship with God.

In other words, it is not about which day one keeps as a Sabbath, but on what level a person has *entered into God’s rest*—ceasing from one’s own works and doing only what we see our heavenly Father do.

It is not about keeping a Jubilee in a physical way, but one’s ability to forgive. It is not about keeping the rituals of a feast on a particular day, but about justification, sanctification, and glorification, as well as growing in faith, hope, and love. These are the spiritual reasons behind the three feasts, which reflect the true heart of God.

John was given a reed to measure the temple, the altar, and the worshipers. But in [Rev. 11:2](#) he was told NOT to measure the outer court, “*for it has been given to the nations.*” The reason for not measuring it is explained to us in [Zech. 2:1–5](#), where we see a similar scene.

¹ Then I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, there was a man with a measuring line in his hand. ² So I said, “Where are you going?” And he said to me, “To measure Jerusalem, to see how wide it is and how long it is.” ³ And behold, the angel who was speaking with me was going out, and another angel was coming out to meet him, ⁴ and said to him, “Run, speak to that young man, saying, ‘Jerusalem will be inhabited without walls, because of the multitude of men and cattle within it. ⁵ For I,’ declares the Lord, ‘will be a wall of fire around her, and I will be the glory in her midst.’”

The scene shows an angel with a reed coming to measure the city of Jerusalem, much like Ezekiel had seen earlier, and John was to see later. This angel was met by another angel who was coming out of the city. This second angel seems to have interrupted and stopped the first angel from measuring the city.

Two Jerusalems

To measure a city is to measure its perimeter, that is, its walls. The walls of the earthly Jerusalem could be measured, of course, but we suddenly see that Jerusalem’s walls have changed into “*a wall of fire.*” In other words, the scene switches from the earthly Jerusalem to the heavenly city, for there are two Jerusalems in Scripture. In fact, the Hebrew name of the city is *Ierushalayim*, which means literally, “two Jerusalems.” We see both of them here in Zechariah’s prophecy.

The implication is that the first angel was told to measure the earthly Jerusalem, but was not to measure the heavenly Jerusalem—the city with fiery walls. (The wall is the “fiery law” of [Deut. 33:2 KJV](#).) Walls limit the size of a city, but the heavenly Jerusalem was to include too great a multitude to be so limited.

Verse 4 (NASB) says that Jerusalem would have no physical walls “*because of the multitude of men and cattle within it.*” The Interlinear Bible renders this, “*Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls,*” which agrees also with the KJV. In other words, this Jerusalem is more than one city. It includes “towns” and rural areas for “cattle” as well as a great multitude of people.

God explains this further in [Zech. 2:11](#),

¹¹ And many nations will join themselves to the Lord in that day and will become My people

Hence, where the earthly Jerusalem was limited by measure, the heavenly Jerusalem is open and unlimited and will, in fact, include the whole earth and all nations, according to the blessing of Abraham. The distinction between the two Jerusalems is evident in Zechariah's prophecy, but because he moves back and forth between the two cities so fluidly, it is often difficult to know which city he is talking about in any given prophecy. But in his second chapter at least, the two angels show us the distinction rather clearly—as long as we are aware that there are two Jerusalems, each having the same name.

In fact, none of the Old Testament prophets use the term “heavenly Jerusalem” or “new Jerusalem” to distinguish between the two cities. The two Jerusalems are distinguished only in the New Testament writings. As we will see later, when John describes the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21, he quotes prophecies of Jerusalem from Zechariah and Isaiah, but applies these not to the earthly city but to the heavenly city. This tells us that whenever the Old Testament prophets speak of Jerusalem, we have to discern which city they were referencing. We cannot assume, as most people do, that they were talking about the earthly city.

The bottom line is that the earthly city could be measured; the heavenly city could not be measured, because it was to include the whole earth, and all nations were to “*become My people*.” The earthly city was for a specific portion of “My people” known as Israelites; the heavenly city is where all nations become “My people.”

The Outer Court Given to the Nations

[Rev. 11:2](#) says that John was not to measure the outer court, because “*it has been given to the nations*.” Who gave it to them? God, of course. The reason that they remain in the outer court is because the outer court in this case represents the flesh realm. In other words, they are not yet justified by faith, but they have the potential of seeking God and finding Jesus Christ, whose blood can cleanse them of sin.

In the earthly temple in Jerusalem, they unlawfully built a wall of partition to keep non-Jews from approaching God. Only Jewish men could pass through the door of this wall. Women and “gentiles” had to keep out. The sign at the door separating these two areas of the outer court read,

“No Gentile may enter beyond the dividing wall into the court around the Holy Place; whoever is caught will be to blame for his subsequent death.”

During an excavation, the actual sign was found by M. Ganneau in 1871. This is the dividing wall that Paul referenced in [Eph. 2:14–18](#), telling us that Christ “*broke down the barrier of the dividing wall... that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace... for through Him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father*.”

There is no evidence in Scripture that Solomon built a dividing wall in the original temple in Jerusalem. Neither did they build such a wall in Zerubbabel's second temple. It was built when King Herod rebuilt the second temple into a larger structure. But Jesus came to tear down that dividing wall. Unfortunately, many today have rebuilt this wall by limiting “My people” status to those of a particular genealogy.

There is no dividing wall in the New Jerusalem, for all have equal access to God. The people are distinguished, not by genealogy, but by their actual relationship with God. All may progress in that relationship from the outer court to the Holy Place and finally into the very presence of God in the Most Holy Place. The outer court is the place of the altar of sacrifice (faith) and the laver (baptism). The Holy Place is for priests—not of Levi, but of Melchizedek—who have received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The Most Holy Place is for those who are part of the body of the High Priest and have been changed into His glorious image.

These three relationships are set forth also in three progressive feasts: Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. As these feasts are fulfilled in us, we gain greater access to God and to the revelation of the word and the things of the Spirit.

Seeing this, we can obtain a better understanding of what it means for the nations to be given the outer court. Most people focus upon the negative element in this—“*they will tread under foot the Holy City for forty-two months*.” Most

picture this as an occupying army of unbelievers who desecrate Jerusalem by their unwelcome presence. But take note that it is only the outer court and the city in general that the nations are able to “*tread under foot*.” In the inner court, the temple, and the altar are worshippers, we are told.

An occupying army (such as the Roman army in 70 A.D.) would not remain in the outer court, nor would they respect any such boundaries. So John was not describing a normal military occupation of the city. Furthermore, in the next verses we find that the Lampstand still remains in the temple to give its light to the nations ([Rev. 11:3, 4](#)). We know from history that in 70 A.D. the Romans took away the Lampstand, for it appears as part of the booty on the Arch of Titus.

Revelation 11 only makes sense when we understand that the outer court was not to be measured, because *it had been opened up to all nations*. The outer court was not limited in size, as it was in the earthly Jerusalem. It was opened up in order to accommodate all nations. Those nations might ignorantly profane the Holy City, of course, but God has drawn them to the Holy City to learn of His ways—to see the light of truth coming from the Lampstand.

Is this not the beginning of the fulfillment of [Isaiah 2:2](#) and [3](#)?

² Now it will come about that in the last days the mountain of the house of the Lord will be established as the chief of the mountains, and will be raised above the hills; and all the nations will stream to it. ³ And many peoples will come and say, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that He may teach us concerning His ways, and that we may walk in His paths.” For the law will go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

The nations come in ignorance, but they leave with the knowledge of God. They come with war-like motives, but they are taught to “*hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks*” ([Isaiah 2:4](#)). Hence, while they may tread down the Holy City in their ignorance, God yet draws them in order to teach them the way of peace.

In fact, that is the underlying message of Jerusalem, “City of Peace.” While the earthly city failed to live up to its name, and thus became “*the bloody city*” ([Ezekiel 24:6, 9](#)), the heavenly city shines forth as the true City of Peace.

As we proceed in our study, we will see how Revelation 11 blends the two Jerusalems into a single story in order to show the contrast between the earthly and the heavenly.

Chapter 8: The Two Witnesses

In [Revelation 11:3, 4](#) we read,

³ And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth. ⁴ These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth.

In the flow of John's revelation, we see that the outer court of the temple has been given to the nations. This outer court is in "*the holy city*," which is the term John uses later for the New Jerusalem coming down from heaven ([Rev. 21:2](#)). Again, in [Rev. 11:19](#) he speaks of opening "*the temple of God which is in heaven*." There is no question, then, that John's temple is a spiritual temple and that the holy city is the New Jerusalem.

On the other hand, this spiritual temple is here on earth, because the living stones are true believers who are living on the earth.

In the World, but Not of the World

There is a temple in heaven itself, but since the time of Moses, God has been building a spiritual temple and city here on the earth. The heavenly structures were used as patterns to construct duplicates here on the earth, so that heaven might be brought to the earth, as Jesus prayed in [Matt. 6:10](#).

The first structures were physical as seen in Moses' tabernacle and Solomon's temple. But these were never meant to be permanent. They were types and shadows to be seen as object lessons to teach us of spiritual things. The greater temple yet to come was to be made of living stones, originating in heaven, but being built and expressed on the earth. This was to be done by the work of the Holy Spirit in people on earth.

In [John 8:23](#) Jesus told His disciples, "*You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world*." He was referring to the fact that the disciples at that time were not yet begotten by the Spirit. They had come from their earthly parents and were therefore of the first Adam and of Jacob-Israel in the flesh. By a second begetting, they were to shift identities from the first Adam to the last and become new creatures, all having a heavenly Father. Only then could they be like Christ and say truthfully, "*I am not of this world*."

That which is not of this world is being constructed in the world in order that heaven might come to earth. So we see the holy city coming down out of heaven in [Rev. 21:2](#). Its origin is in heaven, and it is a spiritual city, but yet it is being built in the world. The same is true with the temple that God is building here on the earth. The overall purpose is for the Kingdom of God to include all that He created at the beginning in [Gen. 1:1](#).

The Nations in the Outer Court

The outer court in [Rev. 11:2](#) serves as the meeting point between heaven and earth. In the three parts of our temple, the Most Holy Place is our *spirit*; the Holy Place is our *soul*; the outer court is our *body*, that is, our flesh. As believers that are part of the temple of God, our flesh is subjected to the spirit, which in turn yields to the Holy Spirit's leadership. However, unbelievers, that is, "the nations," are limited to the outer court, because they are yet fleshly until they have been begotten by God. So they are drawn to the outer court in order to see the light of truth borne by God's witnesses.

The nations in their fleshly condition are carnal, unruly, and restless, for they must come *as they are* in order to see the light of truth. They are pictured as the sea that is constantly tossed. [Isaiah 57:20](#), [21](#) says,

²⁰ But the wicked are like the tossing sea, for it cannot be quiet, and its waters toss up refuse and mud.

²¹ "There is no peace," says my God, "for the wicked."

The great harlot sits upon the waters of the sea, and in [Rev. 17:15](#) we read,

¹⁵ And he said to me, “The waters which you saw where the harlot sits, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues.”

Hence, when God gives the nations access to the outer court, it is as if a sea of humanity, being tossed to and fro, boisterous and unruly, is drawn to the temple of God to hear the word and to see the light of truth. God is not so concerned if they profane the sanctity of the outer court or the city itself. His purpose is to change their hearts and to include them in His Kingdom.

The Witnesses are Lampstands

There are two lampstands in John’s temple. Recall that there was but one lampstand in Moses’ tabernacle ([Exodus 25:31](#)), and ten in Solomon’s temple ([2 Chron. 4:7](#)). The ten were divided into two groups of five, one on the left and the other group on the right, as if each group were meant to provide us with a double witness of grace.

Thus, John reveals only two lampstands. John’s revelation appears to be drawn primarily from the fourth chapter of Zechariah, which is slightly different, but serves the same purpose. [Zech. 4:2, 3](#) says,

² And he [the angel] said to me, “What do you see?” And I said, “I see, and behold, a lampstand all of gold with its bowl on the top of it, and its seven lamps on it with seven spouts belonging to each of the lamps which are on the top of it; ³ also two olive trees by it, one on the right side of the bowl and the other on its left side.”

The prophet sees seven lamps on a single lampstand, as we see so often today in a menorah. But he also sees “*two olive trees by it*,” whose function is to produce olive oil for the lampstand. This is explained later in [Zech. 4:11–14](#),

¹¹ Then I answered and said to him, “What are these two olive trees on the right of the lampstand and on its left?”

The angel seemed to ignore the prophet’s question, so the prophet asked the angel again, but this time with a more detailed description of what he was seeing.

¹² And I answered the second time and said to him, “What are the two olive branches, which are beside the two golden pipes, which empty the golden oil from themselves?” ¹³ So he answered me saying, “Do you not know what these are?” And I said, “No, my lord.” ¹⁴ Then he said, “These are the two anointed ones [“sons of fresh oil”], who are standing by the Lord of the whole earth.”

This simple explanation raises more questions than it answers. However, it is as if the angel expected Zechariah to know the answer from what he has already seen. No doubt this is also why the angel ignored the prophet’s first inquiry. So if we look at the things that the prophet was already shown in the previous verses, we can get a better and more complete answer.

Zerubbabel, the First Son of Oil

In [Zech. 4:6, 7](#) we read of one of the “sons of oil” in that time. It is Zerubbabel, the governor.

⁶ Then he answered and said to me, “This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel, saying, ‘Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ says the Lord of hosts. ⁷ ‘What are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become a plain; and he will bring forth the top stone with shouts of Grace, grace to it!’”

As the governor, Zerubbabel's job was to lay the "top stone" (NASB), or the "headstone" (KJV) in building the second temple. So [Zech. 4:9](#) tells us,

⁹ The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house, and his hands will finish it. Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent me to you.

In [Ezra 3:8, 9, 10](#) we read the actual account of the temple's foundation being laid in Jerusalem. Prophetically speaking, the headstone represented Jesus Christ ([Eph. 2:20](#)), the true Anointed One, that is, the Messiah. Ezra does not record the shouts of the people when this headstone was laid, but Zechariah says it was laid "*with shouts of Grace, grace to it!*" So John tells us many years later in [John 1:17](#),

¹⁷ For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ.

This is consistent also with the two sets of five lampstands that Solomon built for his temple. Five is the biblical number of grace. The two sets of five depict "*grace, grace.*"

As a son of oil, Zerubbabel was a type of Christ in his civil calling, or in his exercise of the Dominion Mandate. Before him were other types of Christ such as Moses and King David. [Haggai 2:23](#) also tells us,

²³ "On that day," declares the Lord of hosts, "I will take you, Zerubbabel, son of Shealtiel, my servant," declares the Lord, "and I will make you like a signet ring, for I have chosen you," declares the Lord of hosts.

A signet ring is what was used to sign and seal a document or decree. Hot wax was poured out, and the signet ring pressed into it, which engraved the seal of the king on the document to make it official. Zerubbabel, then, was God's signet ring, for he bore witness to the decrees of God and implemented them in the earth. In doing this, he was a type of Christ, who carried out all that the Father spoke and decreed.

Joshua, the Second Son of Oil

In the third chapter of Zechariah we are shown the other son of oil. We see the high priest Joshua being given clean garments so that he could minister in the temple. Between the governor and the high priest, we see the two sons of oil who are called to feed the lampstand with oil in order to give light to the people. The governor exercised the Dominion Mandate ([Gen. 1:26](#)), while the high priest exercised the Fruitfulness Mandate ([Gen. 1:28](#)). Together, they portrayed the complete birthright which ultimately belongs to Jesus Christ Himself.

[Zechariah 3:6, 7](#) says,

⁶ And the angel of the Lord admonished Joshua saying, ⁷ "Thus says the Lord of hosts, 'If you will walk in My ways, and if you will perform My service, then you will also govern My house and also have charge of My courts, and I will grant you free access among these who are standing here.'"

So Joshua is the other son of oil, and he actually carries the name of Jesus. Joshua, or Yeshua, is Jesus' Hebrew name that means "salvation."

The purpose of these "two witnesses" is to supply the oil for the lampstand by which the light of the word may spread throughout the whole earth. Hence, they are depicted as "*two olive trees*" in [Zech. 4:3](#) and again as "*two olive branches*" in [Zech. 4:12](#).

John sees it in a slightly different way, for he sees "*two olive trees and the two lampstands*" in [Rev. 11:4](#). Zechariah sees two olive trees and just one lampstand. Nonetheless, it is clear that in order to understand John's revelation, we must compare it to Zechariah's prophecy. Zechariah pictures the lampstand as separate from the olive trees, whereas John pictures two distinct lampstands, which are the two olive trees.

In other words, in John's vision, we see two witnesses each portrayed as an olive-tree/lampstand, as if their source of oil is now internal. Yet it is clear that these two witnesses carry the Dominion Mandate and the Fruitfulness Mandate in the earth, and that their calling is to minister not only to the believers, but to the nations in the outer court. Their ministry is to share the light of Christ to the nations.

Next we will see how the two witnesses relate to Moses-Joshua and Elijah-Elisha.

Chapter 9: Moses and Elijah

The two witnesses in [Rev. 11:4](#) are described as being two olive trees and two lampstands, in order to fulfill the prophecy of [Zech. 4:11](#). They are filled with the Spirit of God, which is the olive oil by which the lampstand shines forth the light of truth. Their message of truth seems to be summarized by the word *grace*, which, when unfolded into its full manifestation and understanding, is the basis of the New Covenant and the restoration of all things.

These two witnesses represent the heavenly temple and the New Jerusalem, but yet their message is to the nations on earth that are yet in darkness. Hence, we see an interaction between heaven and earth—and especially between the heavenly and the earthly Jerusalem. The interaction is the same as Paul described in [Gal. 4:29](#),

²⁹ But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now also.

The children of the Old Covenant persecute those who are of the New Covenant. It is the classic enmity between flesh and spirit and between the children of the old man (Adam) and the children of the New Creation Man (the last Adam). Each side competes for dominion over the earth, claiming that it has the right to rule by the Dominion Mandate. Each side claims that its form of fruitfulness, whether by flesh or by spirit, is the acceptable qualification to be known as Sons of God. But only one of these claims can be valid. John identifies the truth in his gospel of [John 1:12, 13](#),

¹² But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, ¹³ who were begotten [*gennao*] not of blood(line), nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

The Conflict

The struggle over the inheritance often manifests in open conflict and warfare. [Rev. 11:5](#) says,

⁵ And if anyone desires to harm them, fire proceeds out of their mouth and devours their enemies; and if anyone would desire to harm them, in this manner he must be killed.

What is the “fire” that comes out of their mouth? First, we see that this “fire” comes out of both of the two witnesses. Here it is important to understand something about Hebrew metaphors, because it is apparent that these two witnesses do not literally kill their enemies with fire from their mouths. The sword of the Spirit is the word of God ([Eph. 6:17](#)), as opposed to a physical sword. The word of God is spoken from one’s mouth, and so John pictures Jesus in [Rev. 19:15](#), saying, “*and from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may smite the nations.*”

While this description expresses the spiritual sword in carnal terms, the effect of a spiritual sword is totally different. Physical swords kill physically. Spiritual swords kill “the flesh” in a different sense, for when the word of God is believed and embraced, this sword causes a person to identify with Christ in His death, so that he may also identify with Christ’s resurrection life. So Paul says in [Rom. 6:7](#), “*for He who died has been justified from sin*” (The Emphatic Diaglott). Death is the great justifier, and it characterizes all genuine believers. There is no life without first dying. The old man of flesh must die so that the New Creation Man can live and take the reins that govern our actions.

Those who identify with the old Adam or fleshly Israel—or any form of flesh—are trying to keep the old man alive and well so that flesh and blood may inherit the promises of God. But Paul says in [1 Cor. 15:50](#), “*flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.*”

The fire of God coming out of the mouth of Christ, the two witnesses, and, in fact, the entire body of true believers, is a spiritual sword that brings “death” to the flesh in order to bring about its consequence—immortal life. In this way, “*death is swallowed up in victory*” ([1 Cor. 15:54](#)).

In Hebrew metaphoric language, the tongue was said to be a sword, and its tip (or “edge”) was its “mouth.” For example, in [Exodus 17:13](#) we read of the battle against Amalek:

¹³ So Joshua overwhelmed Amalek and his people with the edge [*peh*, “mouth”] of the sword.

Again, the command of God was to destroy idolatrous cities in Israel in [Deut. 13:15](#),

¹⁵ You shall surely strike the inhabitants of that city with the edge [*peh*, “mouth”] of the sword ...

Likewise, the Canaanites who opposed Israel’s advance were to be utterly destroyed by the “mouth” of the sword ([Joshua 6:21](#); [8:24](#); [10:28](#), [32](#), [35](#), etc.). We see, then, that Hebrew metaphors referred to the “edge” (or tip) of a sword as a mouth. Under the Old Covenant, of course, Joshua conquered the land of Canaan by a physical sword, which spoke the word (or carried out the commands of God) by violence and force, resulting in death to all who stood in the way.

Under the New Covenant, however, the sword of the Spirit must be used by the spoken word of God to conquer the earth in a very different way. New Covenant swords kill the flesh, but not the body. While Old Covenant swords bring physical death, these New Covenant swords bring death to the old man in order to give life to the New Creation Man. This is the primary difference between Joshua’s conquest of Canaan and Jesus’ conquest of the earth in our day.

While unbelievers and carnal Christians use physical weapons to force men to convert to their religions, genuine believers use spiritual weapons and the spoken word of truth, “*piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit... to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart*” ([Heb. 4:12](#)).

If Israel had been able and willing to draw near to hear the word of God, as Moses instructed them in [Exodus 20:18–21](#), they would have received the sword of the Spirit by which to conquer the land of Canaan. Their invitation to meet God on the Mount was given on the day which was thereafter celebrated as the feast of weeks (i.e., Pentecost). But they “*stood at a distance*” (NASB), while Moses went up the mount alone to hear the word of God.

It was never God’s pleasure to destroy His enemies. The only reason for the Canaanite genocide was because Israel had refused the sharper sword in favor of the duller physical sword. But now that Christ has come as the Mediator of the New Covenant, and now that the day of Pentecost in Acts 2 has given us access to the sword of the Spirit, we are better equipped to bring the word of God to the nations by spiritual force, rather than by physical violence and coercion.

This, then, is the “fire” that proceeds out of the mouths of the two witnesses to devour their enemies. We cannot view this through Old Covenant eyes without reversing the meaning of the passage and the divine intent itself. How must these “enemies” be killed? John says “*in this manner he must be killed*,” implying a specific manner of death that is distinct from burning people or killing them physically with a sword.

The Authority of the Witnesses

John continues in [Rev. 11:6](#),

⁶ These have the power [*exousia*, “authority”] to shut up the sky, in order that rain may not fall during the days of their prophesying; and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to smite the earth with every plague, as often as they desire.

Once again, the metaphors must be interpreted through New Covenant eyes, even though the references are from an Old Covenant era. What is death under the Old Covenant is life under the New. The types and shadows saw many killed with physical violence, but these actually prophesied of positive things yet to be established under the New Covenant.

First, these two witnesses received the *authority* given in earlier times to Elijah and to Moses. Authority from heaven is given to exercise the Dominion Mandate as a steward of the throne. So we see God telling Moses in [Exodus 7:1 KJV](#), “*I have made thee a god to Pharaoh.*” The NASB renders it “*as God.*” The point is that Moses was given spiritual authority over Pharaoh in order to implement the ten plagues upon Egypt.

Elijah, too, exercised spiritual authority over King Ahab and Queen Jezebel, forbidding the sky to give rain upon the earth for “*three years and six months*” ([James 5:17](#)). This time can also be expressed as 1,260 days or 42 months—which is the time allotted to the two witnesses in [Rev. 11:2](#). It is half of the total time of judgment (2,520 years, or 84 prophetic months).

There may be a short-term fulfillment of the time of the two witnesses at the end of the age as well as a general, long-term time of fulfillment. In long-term prophecy, the two witnesses are represented by many people over many generations, for no one has lived 1,260 years. The overcomers and the martyrs are certainly part of this body of witnesses in the general sense.

The question, however, is whether or not *two individual witnesses*, having the authority of Moses and Elijah, will arise at the end of the age. Our opinions may vary, but if we study these prophecies, we will be able to understand if and when two such witnesses arise. In the end, our opinions can neither make it happen nor hinder the divine plan from being fulfilled. We must watch and see.

The most important thing to recognize is that these two witnesses are called to bear witness to Christ, who is the Mediator of the New Covenant ([Heb. 9:15](#)). Therefore, we must view their actions through New Covenant eyes, rather than looking for a duplicate of what occurred during the time of the Old Covenant.

The plagues under Moses were designed to overthrow the gods of Egypt in order to set the people free. That is the same purpose for the two witnesses. The “plagues” which they bring to the earth are designed to overthrow the gods of all flesh under Mystery Babylon in order to set the earth free from the great harlot—the counterfeit bride.

In particular, John mentions the first plague, where all the water of Egypt was turned to blood. In other words, blood covered the land of Egypt. This was a physical disaster under the Old Covenant, but under the New, it prophesies of the blood of Christ covering the whole earth. (Egypt is a prophetic type of the world or the world system.) Hence, this plague is the means by which Jesus words in [John 12:32, 33](#) are fulfilled:

³² And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself. ³³ But He was saying this to indicate the kind of death by which He was to die.

Today this is often interpreted to mean that if we “lift up Jesus” (i.e., exalt Him through praise), then men will be drawn to Him. But John says that Jesus indicated that if He were lifted up on the cross, He would “*draw all men*” to Himself. It does not depend on the acts (praise) of men, but an act of God’s will to fulfill His promise. The word translated “draw” is *helko*, which means “to drag.” Jesus used the same word in [John 6:44](#), saying, “*no one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him.*” So we can say that because Jesus died on the cross, the Father will indeed drag all men to Himself.

This is the purpose of the fiery word that comes out of the mouth of the two witnesses. It is not to kill, but to restore all men to the Father through Christ. Although the Old Testament Elijah called down fire from heaven in [2 Kings 1:10, 12](#), consuming two groups of fifty soldiers, this is not to be duplicated by the two witnesses. When Jesus’ disciples wanted to imitate Elijah and call down fire from heaven upon the Samaritans, Jesus rebuked them in [Luke 9:55](#) for having an Old Covenant mentality.

In fact, the main prophetic ministry of Elijah, as seen in [Mal. 4:6](#), is to “*restore the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers.*” Jesus Himself told His disciples in [Matt. 17:11](#), “*Elijah is coming and will restore all things.*”

Therefore, we see that the purpose of the two witnesses is to *restore*, not to destroy. When Elijah sealed up the heavens so that it would not rain for 3½ years, it was a prophecy about delaying the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. This is designed to give people a thirst for the Spirit of God and prepare them for the “*times of refreshing*” ([Acts 3:19](#)) that will come afterward.

Chapter 10: Sodom, Egypt, and Jerusalem

John pictures the two witnesses in terms of Moses and Elijah, who represent the law and the prophets, civil and priestly authority, and the Dominion Mandate and the Fruitfulness Mandate. Yet this revelation is three-dimensional in that Moses and Elijah each represent just half of a full ministry. Joshua fulfilled the second part of Moses' ministry, and Elisha fulfilled the second part of Elijah's ministry.

First, Moses was unable to complete his ministry, for he died at the end of the wilderness journey, and Joshua completed the work when he brought Israel into the Promised Land. Elijah too was unable to complete his ministry, for he ran from Jezebel's threats, but Elisha was then given his mantle along with a double portion of Elijah's authority in order to complete this prophetic work of restoration.

In Revelation 11 we see a blend of prophecy between Moses and Elijah in the death of the two witnesses, followed by their resurrection and ascension. Moses died ([Deut. 34:5](#)), and Elijah ascended ([2 Kings 2:11](#)). Hence, the two witnesses die as Moses but also ascend as Elijah. Revelation 11 largely ignores the second part of each of their ministries (i.e., Joshua/Elisha), because the end has not yet come in John's narrative. This is still technically part of the second woe, which does not end, nor does the third and final woe begin, until [Rev. 11:14](#).

The Witnesses Killed in Jerusalem

We read in [Revelation 11:7, 8](#),

⁷ And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them, and overcome them and kill them. ⁸ And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which mystically [or spiritually] is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified.

Here we see plainly that John was not speaking literally, but "mystically." The two witnesses are not literally killed in Jerusalem, as so many have said. Jerusalem is also "*Sodom and Egypt*," and it is plain that geographically speaking, Jerusalem is not literally the city of Sodom, nor is it the entire country of Egypt. John was telling us to interpret this spiritually (*pneumatikos*, from *pneuma*, "spirit"). So we must follow his instructions and look to a mystical city.

How is Jerusalem the equivalent of Sodom and Egypt? Sodom is known for its wickedness (homosexuality in particular), which God destroyed by fire from heaven. Its manner of judgment is identified with Elijah, who also called down fire from heaven ([2 Kings 1:10, 12](#)). Egypt, of course, was judged through Moses. Jerusalem was the place where "*their Lord was crucified*," for Jesus was a prophet like Moses ([Acts 3:22](#)); but more than that, Jerusalem was the place where all of the prophets were persecuted and killed ([Matt. 23:37](#)).

In [Luke 13:33](#) Jesus says, "*it cannot be that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem.*"

Nonetheless, in the prophetic picture presented by John, Jerusalem has taken on a greater role than just an earthly city. The city is a type of the Old Covenant ([Gal. 4:24, 25](#)), pictured as Hagar, and her spiritual children are the children of the flesh (pictured as Ishmael). The earthly Jerusalem cannot inherit the Kingdom of God, for this is reserved for the children of "Sarah," the heavenly Jerusalem ([Gal. 4:26, 30](#)).

The two cities have a fundamental disagreement in regard to the birthright, for each lays claim to the promises of God and considers its "son" to be chosen. Yet to Paul, the chief evidence settling the question of inheritance is the fact that the children of the earthly Jerusalem persecute the children of the heavenly Jerusalem, even as Ishmael persecuted Isaac in the original story.

Paul well understood this, for he personally had persecuted the children of promise in his former life in Judaism. In [Gal. 1:13, 14](#) he writes,

¹³ For you have heard of my former manner of life in Judaism, how I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure, and tried to destroy it; ¹⁴ and I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions.

Paul was admitting that he, as a fleshly Jew in Judaism, was not a child of the promise, nor was he a spiritual son of Sarah, as long as he remained attached to the Old Covenant and to the city that it represented. As an unbelieving Jew, having impeccable genealogy in the tribe of Benjamin ([Phil. 3:5](#)), he was nonetheless *a spiritual Ishmaelite* who could not inherit the promises of God. Yet he is also an example of one who had switched mothers by faith in Christ and by adhering to the New Covenant (“Sarah”). Only then was his claim to the inheritance and to the promises of God valid. Only then was he ranked among the “chosen people.”

It is plain, then, that the earthly Jerusalem is not the mother of those who have come to Christ, the Mediator of the New Covenant, for they are not Ishmaelites, but rather are part of the Isaac company ([Gal. 4:28](#)). Yet there are many Christians today who claim Jerusalem-Hagar as their mother and believe strongly that Hagar’s children are the chosen ones. Nothing can be further from the truth. Those who are begotten by flesh are fleshly; those who are begotten by the Spirit are spiritual. Both claim the same Father; but *their mother determines the inheritance*.

Knowing these things helps us to understand what John meant when he spoke of the two witnesses being killed in “*Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified*.” It is obvious that these witnesses were not killed in (or by) the New Jerusalem. In fact, the entire scene since the start of the chapter has taken place in the outer court which was “*given to the nations*.” In other words, we are seeing unbelievers or carnal people who are limited to the outer court, and the earthly Jerusalem itself is an extension of that outer court.

Jerusalem is pictured as a city under occupation by unbelievers. Many prophecy teachers assume that these unbelieving people cannot be Jews, but John makes no distinction here between Jews and other people. The distinction is only between fleshly and spiritual, between those who have access to the Holy Place and those limited to the outer court.

In fact, because Jerusalem is linked to Egypt, known as “*the house of slavery*” ([Exodus 13:3](#)), any child of the flesh and anyone who adheres to the Old Covenant (as Paul says) remains “*in slavery with her children*” ([Gal. 4:25](#)). Hence, even as Moses led Israel out of the house of bondage at Passover, so also did Jesus Christ lead the church out of bondage when He died on the cross as the Passover Lamb.

This means that the Jewish leadership in Jerusalem, who persecuted the Son of God and then later the church, were playing the role of Pharaoh, not of Israel. Jerusalem was thus Egypt, spiritually speaking. *Jerusalem is not the oppressed, but the oppressor*. Jerusalem is not the home of the people of God, but of God’s “enemies,” from a legal standpoint.

Legal Enemies

The law in [Lev. 26:40–42](#) tells us that if the Israelites cast aside the law of God and act with “hostility” against Him, then God would also act with hostility against Israel. In other words, God would treat lawless Israelites as *enemies*. Isaiah confirms this in [Isaiah 63:10](#),

¹⁰ But they [Israel] rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit; therefore, He turned Himself to become their enemy; He fought against them.

The prophet set forth the hostility of God in [Isaiah 29:1–6](#), where he refers to Jerusalem by the poetic name, Ariel. This name has a double meaning: (1) the lion of God, and (2) the hearth of God.

¹ Woe, O Ariel, Ariel the city where David once camped! Add year to year, observe your feasts on schedule. ² And I will bring distress to Ariel, and she shall be a city of lamenting and mourning; and she shall be like an Ariel [hearth of God, i.e., a place of burning] to me.

During the time of David, the city was the Lion of God; but in later years, after degenerating into lawlessness and apostasy, God became their enemy and treated it as a hearth for burning. What follows is a prophecy showing God's destruction of Jerusalem. Still addressing the city, God says in [Isaiah 29:5, 6](#),

⁵ But the multitude of your enemies shall become like fine dust, and the multitude of the ruthless ones like the chaff which blows away; and it shall happen instantly, suddenly. ⁶ From the Lord of hosts you [Jerusalem] will be punished with thunder and earthquake and loud noise, with whirlwind and tempest and the flame of a consuming fire.

Many assume that this is about non-Jewish nations fighting against the Jews in Jerusalem at the end of the age. But from the outset, God tells us that He Himself has declared war against the city on account of its lawlessness. In verse 3 God says of Jerusalem, or "Ariel,"

³ And I will camp against you encircling you, and I will set siegeworks against you, and I will raise up battle towers against you.

Therefore, if God indeed raises up foreign nations against Jerusalem, it is clear that God fights on the side of those foreign armies, for He takes credit for laying siege to Jerusalem.

The Outcome

Then we find a very remarkable outcome in this battle. [Isaiah 29:7](#) says,

⁷ And the multitude of all the nations who wage war against Ariel, even all who wage war against her and her stronghold, and who distress her, shall be like a dream, a vision of the night.

In other words, in regard to all the nations whom God has conscripted in His siege of Jerusalem, the outcome of the war will be like a dream that is described in the next verse.

⁸ And it will be as when a hungry man dreams—and behold, he is eating; but when he awakens, his hunger is not satisfied, or as when a thirsty man dreams—and behold, he is drinking, but when he awakens, behold, he is faint, and his thirst is not quenched. Thus the multitude of all the nations shall be, who wage war against Mount Zion.

We see here that all of the enemies of God who have waged war against Jerusalem (as God has led them), will have dreams of inheriting the city, but will discover it is all an illusion. When they wake up from their dream, they will find that they are still hungry and thirsty. Today, both Jews and Muslims are fighting over the city of Jerusalem, with Christian Zionists cheering for the Jews. But it is all an illusion, based on the belief that the old city will be the capital of the Kingdom in the age to come. The city is nothing more than a house of bondage that *enslaves all who claim it as their mother*.

For our purposes, the point of this passage in Isaiah is to show that God's enemies include all Jews who remain hostile to Jesus Christ and who continue to adhere to the Old Covenant. At the present time both Jews, Muslims, and Christians occupy portions of the old city, and the right to rule the city is still being disputed.

In the end, none of them will be satisfied, for the city itself is under divine judgment. [Isaiah 29:5, 6](#) seems to describe a nuclear explosion that will render the city uninhabitable. In the end, the city will be no one's inheritance, and it will all seem like a good dream that leaves everyone empty when they awake from sleep.

Perhaps this is how Hagar will be "cast out" ([Gal. 4:30](#)).

With this background from the rest of Scripture, we now have the tools to understand the specific prophecy of the two witnesses in the flow of John's revelation.

Chapter 11: The Beast that Wages War

The two witnesses in Revelation 11, as far as their ministries are concerned, are pictured in terms of Moses and Elijah. Zechariah, however, pictures them as two olive trees and portrays them as Zerubbabel the governor and Joshua the high priest. It is clear, then, that different people have played the role of the two witnesses over the centuries. We must, then, look beyond their personal identities and see what they represent on a higher level.

Moses and Elijah represent the law and the prophets. Zerubbabel and Joshua represent civil and religious (priestly) rulership. Seen on this level, we may find other types and shadows who have represented two witnesses during the past millennia. Moses and Aaron bore witness of the truth as a team, but Moses and Elijah lived in different generations. Hence, it is not required for the two witnesses to minister together as two individuals in a single generation.

In ancient times, the prophets until Christ were killed in Jerusalem, but after that time, the old city became known as a metaphor for Old Covenant religion. The fact that John identifies that city with Sodom and Egypt makes it more difficult to claim that earthly Jerusalem is the place where two witnesses in the future will be killed.

The Beast from the Abyss

So who are these witnesses in Revelation 11, and what is the time frame of their ministry? Who kills them, and when?

We find our first major clue in [Rev. 11:7](#), which says,

⁷ And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them, and overcome them and kill them.

John says the two witnesses are to be killed by “*the beast that comes up out of the abyss.*” What beast is that? The answer is found earlier in [Rev. 9:2](#) in the time of the first woe, where the fifth angel “*opened the bottomless pit,*” that is, the *abyss*. We have already seen that this spoke of the rise of Mohammed and his new Islamic religion.

Recall that God raised up Islam to judge the church for its idolatry, murder, sorcery, and immorality ([Rev. 9:20, 21](#)). Essentially, the church had taken on the characteristics of the earthly Jerusalem with its Old Covenant mindset and all of the corruptions and perversions from the temple in earlier times. Most important, perhaps, was their reliance upon the traditions of men, which, according to [Matt. 15:9](#), caused the people to worship God “*in vain.*”

Because God judges by His law, which mandates that the judgment should fit the crime, God raised up another legalistic religion based on other traditions of men to judge the church. Mohammed rose up from Arabia, the inheritance of Ishmael. It is therefore an Ishmaelite religion, coming out of Hagar, which, Paul says, is “*Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem*” ([Gal. 4:25](#)).

So are the two witnesses killed by Islam? Not necessarily, for Jerusalem is the mother of all children of the Old Covenant. Islam is certainly an Old Covenant religion, but so is Judaism and much of Christianity. Hence, the two witnesses could be killed by either Islamics or Jews or even carnal Christians and still fulfill the prophecy.

We must view this more broadly, instead of looking at a single religion that kills these witnesses. It is the spirit or “beast” rising from the abyss who should be given credit for killing the witnesses, regardless of which of its agents do the stoning. In fact, as we will see later in our study of Revelation 13, there is a church beast that arises out of the sea—that is, the abyss—and this is primarily a church beast whose origin is the same as the Islamic beast.

Unfortunately, the church too has become fleshly, requiring church membership in an earthly organization rather than a spiritual begetting that might make them members of the heavenly assembly ([Heb. 12:23](#)). In recent years, as this

apostasy has deepened, we have seen the rise of Dispensationalism and its offspring, Christian Zionism, which have brought many Christians back into Egyptian slavery by claiming Hagar-Jerusalem as their spiritual “mother.”

Hence, all three of these religions have been influenced by the same beast from the abyss. All of them are children of the flesh ([Gal. 4:29](#)), complete with bitter sibling rivalry over who will inherit the birthright. The biblical answer is that *none of them* will inherit the promise of God. The way to the inheritance is through a spiritual begetting that makes Sarah (New Jerusalem) one’s mother.

This requires faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Islam honors Jesus as a great prophet and teacher, but does not confess Him as the Son of God. Christianity confesses Him as the Son of God, but causes men to place their faith in the church and to maintain only an *indirect* relationship, often portraying Christ as unapproachable. Judaism rejects Jesus altogether.

Each in their own way brings men into the slavery of Hagar, regardless of their religious zeal. No religion likes its heart to be exposed, for they demand immunity from divine prosecution. But the hearts of men are exposed by their own carnality, especially in their violent methods of spreading their religious “revelations.” The Old Covenant (Hagar-Ishmael) method is by force, violence, and war, but the new Covenant (Sarah-Isaac) method is by genuine love that is willing to give one’s life for an enemy ([Rom. 5:6–8](#)).

So we find that the two witnesses are killed by the inspiration of the earthly Jerusalem. This is the type of violent behavior that we would expect from the spirit of that city. And what did the angel tell Hagar about her son even before he was born? [Gen. 16:12](#) says,

¹² And he will be a wild donkey [*pareh awdawn*] of a man, his hand will be against everyone, and everyone’s hand will be against him; and he will live to the east of all his brothers.

The angelic revelation shows that Ishmael was to have a violent streak, and this is why he persecuted Isaac, for he knew that Isaac was his competitor for the birthright. His solution was not to cultivate righteous character that might qualify him to receive the birthright, but to use violence in order to kill his competitor.

War Against the Saints

The beast from the abyss, John says, was to “*make war with them, and overcome them and kill them*” ([Rev. 11:7](#)). This is a direct reference to the little horn in [Dan. 7:21, 22](#),

²¹ I kept looking, and that horn was waging war with the saints and overpowering them ²² until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was passed in favor of the saints of the Highest One, and the time arrived when the saints took possession of the kingdom.

We have already identified this little horn with the Roman church beginning with the establishment of church law in the Empire. The Emperor Justinian instituted his new law code in 529 A.D., revised it the next year, and made it effective by the end of December, 534 A.D.

This was done while altering the calendar as well, for up to that time all legal contracts were dated according to A.U.C. (*ad urbe condita*), the year of the founding of Rome in 753 B.C.

Justinian changed the calendar to begin a week after Christ’s birth, which he supposed was on December 25, 1 B.C. Since there was no Year 0, the calendar began on the day that came to be known as January 1, 1 A.D. To the Romans, it was New Year’s Day of the year 754.

The little horn is described in [Dan. 7:25](#), saying,

²⁵ And he will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.

In waging war against the saints, wearing them down, and actually overpowering them, the little horn has done what the beast from the abyss has also done in [Rev. 11:7](#). The time period is also the same. [Dan. 7:25](#) is somewhat obscure: “a time, times, and half a time,” but as we will see later in [Rev. 13:5–7](#), John interprets this obscure reference to mean “forty-two months,” or 3½ years. In other words, “a time” is one year, “times” is two years, and “half a time” is six months.

Yet a time of forty-two months is also the time allotted to the nations to “*tread under foot the holy city*” in [Rev. 11:2](#) while the two witnesses prophesy to them. So the events of Revelation 11 are directly linked to the events of Revelation 13, which we have yet to cover.

If we use Justinian’s new calendar and new law code as our starting point, and consider a prophetic “year” to be 360 days/years in actual length, then 1,260 years past 529–534 A.D. brings us to 1789–1794. This time was marked by the French Revolution, followed in 1798 by the pope being imprisoned by Napoleon. The papacy then received its “fatal wound” that would be healed a few years later when the papacy was restored. We will cover that history later in our study of Revelation 13.

During the 1,260 years leading up to the French Revolution, the saints (or overcomers) came under persecution from all brands of Old Covenant (violent) religion, each inspired by the beast from the abyss.

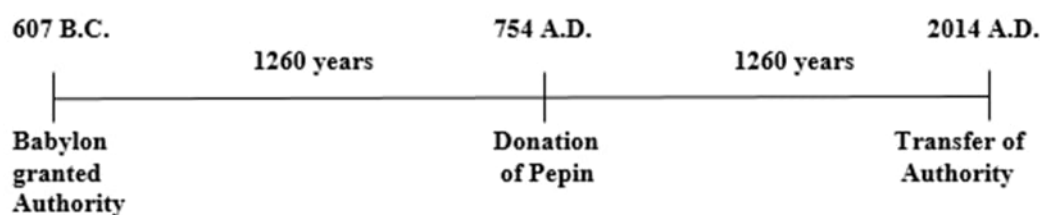
Meanwhile, it is sufficient for us to see that the beast from the abyss was to wage war against the saints for forty-two prophetic months (1,260 years). The saints in [Dan. 7:21](#) are thus pictured and represented by the two witnesses in Revelation 11.

As representatives of a greater body of saints during this long period of time, they are not said to be “killed” until the end of this time, but because the beast has power to overpower them, they must be killed in the end. Otherwise, they could hardly represent those overcomers who had been persecuted and martyred over many generations.

The Big Picture

In addition to this, there are other 1,260-year cycles that ought to be considered in order to get a complete picture of this time period. Each has its own portion of revelation. The broadest application is seen when we look at the entire “seven times” period of 2,520 years during which time the beast systems exercised the power of the Dominion Mandate.

Nebuchadnezzar was given this Mandate in 607 B.C., and when Babylon fell, it was passed on to Persia, then Greece, Rome, and finally to the little horn. Only a single century (163–63 B.C.) interrupted beast rule, and so this century must be added to the first 1260-year period.



From 607 B.C. to 754 A.D., the beasts exercised power for 1,260 of those years. The year 754 was the midpoint of the 2,520-year time of beast rule, and it was the year that the popes were given civil power (over the Papal States). This midpoint was discussed fully in [Book 2 of Daniel: Prophet of the Ages, chapter 8](#). The first 1,260 years is the main

focus of Daniel's prophecy. The last 1,260-year cycle, revealed by John, extends from 754–2014, when the divine court transferred the authority of the Dominion Mandate to the saints of the Most High.

It seems clear that the two witnesses reach the full end of their "*sackcloth*" ministry in 2014 when the beast lost its authority in the courts of heaven. Sackcloth ([Rev. 11:3](#)) is the clothing of one who is fasting and praying. It is a time of mourning during a time of pressure (*thlipsis*) or tribulation. Such clothing is to be contrasted with regular garments, wherein we may rejoice in the exercise of authority.

The date of 2014, I believe, marked the end of the beast's ability to overpower the saints in its war against them. The tide has now turned, because the saints won their case before the divine court. Even as this entire 2,520-year cycle began with a three-year transition from 607–604 B.C. (when Jerusalem was captured), so also are we seeing the same three-year transition transpire from 2014–2017.

Chapter 12: Resurrection and Ascension

The timing of prophecy is often complex, especially in long-term prophecy, because there are usually multiple beginning points and therefore also multiple end points. God does this in order to give a double witness to those called to observe those beginning points in their generation, but also for those called to observe the end points. A single time period might be a coincidence, but when we have multiple beginning and end points, the odds of this being a mere coincidence become extremely low to the point of near impossibility.

The 1,260 years (“days”) has multiple starting points as well. One begins with Justinian’s law code in 529–534 and ends with the French Revolution in 1789–1794. Another begins in 754–756 with Pepin’s donation of land to the church, and ending in 2014–2016 in our time. The interim was not time lost or wasted. As we will see when we study Revelation 13, a new beast was to arise from the earth during this time, a beast which Daniel did not foresee, but John did.

Having two cycles of 1,260 years to observe, we also should take note that because this time is also expressed in terms of 42 months, it is the measure of a prophetic reed (42 handbreadths). Since the holy city was to be trodden down for 42 “months” (42 x 30 years), we can see that a handbreadth is the measure of short-term divine judgment, while a reed is the measure of long-term divine judgment.

Hence, the number 42 is the number of tribulation, based on the number 21, which is the biblical number of “distress” or trouble. The Greek word is *thlipsis*, often translated “tribulation.” The word was originally used of a particular method of punishment, where a man was laid down and a boulder was slowly lowered onto his body to crush him by the pressure. Although this word picture comes to us from the Greek, it does describe the pressure and distress in Hebrew thought as well.

Essentially, God raised up the little horn to wage war on the saints and to bring tribulation and pressure upon them until the time of the end. In Revelation 13, John added to Daniel’s revelation by telling us that two beasts were to arise, and not just one. The second was to arise when the first received a deadly head wound that was then healed. While the first beast was the religious beast of Rome, the second was a financial beast that would ally itself with the first and give it a further extension of life. This was the Rothschild banking system that arose in 1798, the very year that the pope was taken captive by Napoleon.

And so the beast system, reinforced by the modern banking system, received an extension of life beyond the French Revolution (1789–1794) to the present end points of 2014–2016.

Who are the Two Witnesses?

When we examine the long-term time period in the prophecy of the two witnesses, the two witnesses represent companies of saints being opposed and persecuted in the beast’s war against them. In each generation God has raised up leaders, of course, and no doubt these historic leaders may be seen as specific witnesses in their respective times. Yet because they bore witness for only a short time within the framework of a 1,260-year time period, none of these outstanding leaders could possibly be—by themselves—one of the two witnesses, except as types and shadows. They were part of a collective body of saints who were nameless in Daniel 7, but who made names for themselves and were remembered by those who study church history.

The sword of the word proceeded out of their mouths as they spoke divine truth. That sword was effective, as many obtained justification by faith through the death of their flesh ([Rom. 6:7](#)). Likewise, it was in their hands to bring the rain of the Holy Spirit in various revivals over the years—typified by Elijah, who called down fire from heaven and also prayed for rain after the 3½ year drought. The literal Old Covenant types and shadows thus found New Covenant fulfillments.

If there are witnesses in each generation of the past, then certainly there must be two witnesses in the final generation of this 1,260-year time frame. In fact, we might expect to see a climactic end in the last generation. However, this does not mean the two witnesses must die in Jerusalem—and certainly not in the vanished city of Sodom, or even in the land of Egypt ([Rev. 11:8](#)). John tells us specifically that they die in a spiritual city, of which the old Jerusalem and Sodom are parts.

Israel and Judah as Witnesses

We must also consider that the two witnesses could be blind to their calling. In other words, they might not know that they were the two witnesses. [Isaiah 43:8](#) tells us that Israel was both blind and deaf, and yet while in captivity they were God's witnesses ([Isaiah 43:10, 12](#)). In that sense, and on that level, the two *nations* of Israel and Judah were God's two witnesses, one called to exercise the Dominion Mandate, and the other the Fruitfulness Mandate.

I have already shown how [Zech. 4:3](#) and [11](#) picture the two witnesses as being olive trees, whose oil would give light in the lampstand. In [Jer. 11:16](#) God tells Israel and Judah, "The Lord called your name *"A green olive tree, beautiful in fruit and form."* This comes in the context of God's criticism of the nations (Judah in particular) for their failure to succeed in their calling.

Obviously, only a small minority among the people of Judah actually bore witness of the truth, since most of them were rebellious against God and knew not the truth. So Paul said in [Rom. 11:1–10](#) that only the remnant of grace was actually "chosen," and the rest did not obtain the promise. In other words, their genealogy was not what made them "chosen" in the sight of God, but rather their faith and obedience. In Elijah's day this amounted to a mere 7,000 men ([Rom. 11:4](#)), which was a very tiny minority indeed, and Paul relates this to the situation in his own time. The church was a tiny minority of faith-driven men and women coming out of the nation of Judah.

As time passed, even the church itself fell into the same kind of unbelief and rebellion that had befallen Israel and Judah. The remnant of grace remained relatively small among those who called themselves Christians, because only a few really had faith in Jesus Christ, while the majority had faith in the church and in its leaders. Likewise, their faith rested in Old Covenant salvation which was based upon their own decision or vow, rather than in God's New Covenant vow and in His ability to keep His promise.

Reliance upon the flesh, whatever form this takes, is evidence that one is not part of the remnant of grace and is still in need of a faith upgrade in order to be an *inheritor*.

The Death of the Witnesses

In [Rev. 11:7](#) we read that the beast makes war against two witnesses, overcomes them, and kills them. This is also what [Dan. 7:21](#) tells us about the little horn. In [Rev. 11:10](#) their "dead bodies" then are said to lie in the street of this mystical, or spiritual city. [Rev. 11:9](#) and [10](#) then say,

⁹ And those from the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations will look at their dead bodies for three and a half days, and will not permit their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb. ¹⁰ And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and make merry; and they will send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.

Again, this is an overall picture of a lengthy historical period, which is pictured as if speaking about two single individuals. But the 3½ days of death, leading to their resurrection and ascension, gives us a major clue about how to interpret this. It is the same time period as Daniel's "*time, times, and half a time*" ([Dan. 7:25](#)), as well as John's 42 months ([Rev. 11:2](#)) and 1,260 days ([Rev. 11:3](#)), which is 3½ years. The time is the same, but expressed in different ways in order to fit the metaphors.

Throughout each generation, God's witnesses, testifying of the truth to a hostile world (including the church) were opposed, persecuted, and killed for their unwelcome call to come out of darkness and into the light. Jesus said in [John 3:19–21](#),

¹⁹ And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil. ²⁰ For everyone who does evil hates the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. ²¹ But he who practices the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.

A good historical example of the rejoicing over the death of the witnesses is mentioned by John Fox in his book, Flood of Light upon the Book of Revelation, p. 79,

“The Bohemians had always been among the staunchest opponents of Rome; but in A.D. 1513 a Papal Bull was issued calling the Bohemians to present their case before the 5th Lateran Council on May 5th, A.D. 1514; but none came. In A.D. 1516 Cardinal A. Pucini said before the Lateran Council: ‘There is an end of resistance to Papal rule and religion; nobody opposes any more’ ...

“Three and a half years went by; then God did a wonderful thing. His Spirit of strength entered into Martin Luther, who, on October 31st, 1517, brought out his famous ‘95 Thesis’ against the doctrines and practices of the Church of Rome, and nailed it up on the door of Wittenburg Church.”

The Roman Church rejoiced prematurely when no one bothered to show up to this Lateran Council. The Bohemian Protestants knew that their word would be rejected, and that they would simply be killed for their witness of the truth. Cardinal Pucini took their absence as a sign that there was no further resistance to church authority—after untold numbers of people had been killed and tortured in the previous Inquisitions. The church seemed to have crushed all resistance.

But then after 3½ years, Martin Luther, a Roman priest, became so disgusted with the practice of paying one's way into heaven, along with the church doctrine of justification by works, that he wrote out his 95 objections and nailed them to the church door at Wittenburg. Suddenly, dead Protestantism came back to life, and the Roman church was unable to snuff it out.

John's vision of death, resurrection, and ascension was a vivid metaphor prophesying of the victory given to the overcomers and their message of truth. [Rev. 11:12](#) says,

¹² And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, “Come up here.” And they went up into heaven in the cloud, and their enemies beheld them.

The pattern portrayed here is from the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ Himself. John even mentions “*a great earthquake*” in the next verse, which parallels the quake felt when Christ was raised from the dead ([Matt. 28:2](#)). In other words, John was telling us that the circumstances surrounding Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension were prophetic patterns for the saints in the future.

No doubt we will see yet more of these patterns fulfilled at the actual resurrection of the dead. But even prior to the final fulfillment, we see the two witnesses being raised up in similar fashion on their own level of fulfillment.

[Rev. 11:13](#) concludes this section, saying,

¹³ And in that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell; and seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.

The “city” in question is the same city where the witnesses were killed. It is the oppressive city called Sodom, Egypt, and the earthly Jerusalem. To this list we may add Rome, but it also includes virtually the whole earth that is ruled by the flesh and remains in darkness without the light of the word.

When “*a tenth of the city fell*,” the context compels us to interpret this in terms of the Roman “city,” that is, not merely the city of Rome itself, but the area of Roman rule. The Protestants who had sprung to life after Martin Luther’s action in 1517 brought a great spiritual earthquake that overthrew a tenth of the people that Rome had controlled up to that time. In fact, just a few years later, in 1536, England broke away entirely when King Henry VIII passed the Act of Supremacy that made him the head of the Church of England, denying papal sovereignty over an entire nation.

In the German states, meanwhile, many rulers also joined the Protestant movement and refused to remain subservient to the popes.

John says that “*seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake*.” Since this earthquake has hit a spiritual city, it is apparent that the earthquake is not a literal earthquake as well. The number of people killed is equal to the number of the remnant of grace in the days of Elijah ([Rom. 11:4](#)). This may be seen in various ways, but to be consistent with the type of death we have already seen from the earlier verses, we should NOT look for 7,000 casualties from collapsed buildings. It is the same kind of death that the two witnesses were causing by calling down the fire of the Holy Spirit upon men. Such death justifies men through the death of the flesh.

Hence, it becomes clear that the 7,000 who die in the collapse of the city represent those called to be part of the remnant of grace. These come to a knowledge of the truth as they are set free from the rule of the great oppressive city. They die to self and are set free from the bondage of the flesh. They are then able to fulfill their callings as the remnant of grace, which, according to Paul, is based upon the sovereign calling of God upon their lives. [Rom. 11:5](#), [6](#) says,

⁵ In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God’s gracious choice. ⁶ But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace.

The example of “*God’s gracious choice*” is given earlier in [Rom. 9:11](#), [12](#), where we read of the birth of Jacob and Esau:

¹¹ for though the twins were not yet born, and had not done anything good or bad, in order that God’s purpose according to His choice might stand, not because of works, but because of Him who calls, ¹² it was said to her, “The older will serve the younger.”

So we may conclude that when John speaks of the 7,000 “killed” in the collapse of a tenth of the oppressive spiritual city, the event was God’s way of taking His “tithe” by bringing His remnant of grace into the realization of the truth outside of the Roman church. God took personal responsibility to set them free, in order that it might be by grace (God’s decision) rather than waiting for the 7,000 to make their own decision to break free from Rome.

When God intervenes in the affairs of men, it is to fulfill His own vow, which is based on the New Covenant. Hence, He takes responsibility to initiate it and to accomplish the goal. This is the essence of grace.

Chapter 13: The Seventh Trumpet

[Revelation 11:14](#) tells us,

¹⁴ The second woe is past; behold, the third woe is coming quickly.

Recall that the first woe, brought in by the fifth angel in [Rev. 9:1](#), was the Saracen woe that brought Islamic judgment upon the church. It ended in 1063 ([Rev. 9:12](#)), when the sixth angel brought in the second (Seljuk Turks) woe, which culminated in the overthrow of Constantinople through the use of gunpowder and cannons.

The second woe, however, was then extended to include the Protestant Reformation, which was actually another form of divine judgment upon the Roman church. This woe was brought about by the use of the printing press, which created the “little book” (*biblaridion*, or “little bible”) in [Rev. 10:2](#).

The time of the second woe then seems to continue into [Rev. 11](#), which shows the two witnesses prophesying under persecution directed at them by “*the beast that comes up out of the abyss*” ([Rev. 11:7](#)). This is the beast or spirit of the earthly Jerusalem—carnal, legalistic religion whose foundation is some version of the Old Covenant.

Although this persecution may be traced back to the time when Cain killed Abel, the problem reached its crescendo during the time of the Inquisitions, when the Roman church killed and tortured multitudes of dissenters in its attempt to maintain power and unity of doctrine through fear and coercion. During this time, love was sacrificed on the altar of unity, as we might expect from any form of Old Covenant religion.

John then sees the martyrs represented by two witnesses who have the callings of the law and prophets, Judah and Israel, and having the scepter of Judah and the birthright of Joseph. The death of the martyrs in the spiritual streets of this spiritual city seem to coincide with the end of the Thyatira era (529–1517 A.D.), wherein Jezebel figures prominently ([Revelation 2:20](#)). Recall that Jezebel had killed the prophets, leaving only 7,000 as the remnant of grace ([1 Kings 19:18](#); [Rom. 11:4](#)).

The end of the Thyatira era portrays the death of the martyrs (witnesses) for 3½ “days” from 1513–1517, when, at the Fifth Lateran Council in 1514, Cardinal Pucini proclaimed to the pope that all opposition had ceased. The two witnesses were “dead.” But then they rose again and ascended when Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses to the church door in Wittenburg, launching the start of the Sardis church era (1517–1776).

Sardis is the precious stone representing those Protestants who began to flourish and propagate the gospel of justification by faith alone. Because they found protection in Germany, England, and Holland, the Roman church was unable to stop this rising tide. The witnesses “ascended.”

During the Sardis church era, various Reformers studied the Scriptures and pondered the principles of Christian government. Some experimented on a small scale. Others wrote treatises on “natural law,” by which they meant “the laws of nature and nature’s God,” i.e., the Creator. All of these efforts reached a culmination in 1776 with the establishment of a new Christian Republic in the New World, a *Protestant* Christian Republic that was bitterly resented by the Roman church. The popes often attacked the idea of a Republic, for they backed the Catholic monarchies of Europe and believed this was the divinely-appointed form of government.

As for the start of the third woe, that is, the seventh trumpet, it is difficult to pinpoint a single beginning point—nor should we try. We have already seen how God sets up multiple starting points in order to provide us with double and triple witnesses.

[Rev. 11:13](#) ends the second woe with the fall of “the city,” which must be the same city described in verse 8, where the two witnesses were killed. That city is called Sodom, Egypt, and (by implication) Jerusalem, but it is not called “Babylon.” The name “Babylon” is reserved for a later phase of carnal religion and does not appear until [Rev. 18:2](#).

Babylon appears to be the name used when the focus of prophecy shifts from the little horn, as Daniel saw it, to the extra beast that John saw in [Rev. 13:11](#).

Daniel saw the beast which John described as coming out of the sea in [Rev. 13:1](#), but John saw beyond Daniel's revelation when he described a beast coming out of the earth in [Rev. 13:11](#). This second banking beast, allied with the first religious beast, appears to be the final phase of tribulation prior to the coming of Christ. As we will see later, this final phase, known to historians as "The Holy Alliance," lasted precisely 200 years from the Congress of Vienna in 1814–1815 until the Dominion was given to the saints in 2014–2015.

The Message of the Seventh Angel

When angels blow trumpets, they send a silent but effective message throughout the earth. So we see the message of the seventh angel given in [Rev. 11:15](#),

¹⁵ And the seventh angel sounded; and there arose loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever [*aionios ton aionon*, "for the ages of the ages"]].

Such announcements come *before* the fact, not after they have been completed. This trumpet, then, is the divine Statement of Intent. More than this, it is a Statement of Fact in the sense that when God intends to do something, He always succeeds. Men may have good intentions when they make such statements, but God's intentions form the divine Plan which has been predestined from the beginning to succeed.

Many theologians have presented God as One who tries many tactics, hoping to find one that is successful—but in the end, He loses most of humanity and must resort to an iron fist of total destruction of all who resisted His will. Such a portrayal, of course, does not describe the God of Scripture. To fail is to sin, for the Hebrew word *khawtaw* ("sin") literally means *to fail to hit the mark*, to fall short of the target or goal. God never fails. Hence, when men resist the will (*thelema*) of God, we know that their resistance was built into the plan (*boulema*).

In the end, God's will is always fulfilled, but only after God raises up opposition, making it appear that God is struggling to succeed. When we add the Time factor to the will of God, it is equal to the plan. I wrote about this in [chapter 4](#) of my book, [The Problem of Evil](#).

So [Rev. 11:15](#) should be understood as a divine decree that precedes the fulfillment of that decree. God speaks of it in the past tense, as we so often see in the Hebrew language. A good example of this manner of speech is found in the Abrahamic promise in [Gen. 17:5 \(KJV\)](#). Paul comments on this promise in [Rom. 4:17](#), saying,

¹⁷ as it has been written, "A Father of Many Nations I have constituted thee,"—in the presence of that God whom he believed, who makes alive the dead, and calls things not in being, as though existing.

The KJV catches the essence of this idea, telling us that God "*calleth those things which be not as though they were.*" In other words, God speaks of future things as if they already existed. He speaks of promised things as if they had already come to pass. Such is the viewpoint of the timeless God, the alpha and omega, the One who sees the end from the beginning, the God who guarantees success.

It is the language of a God who is confident in His power and ability to succeed in all that He sets out to do. Men—even religious men—often have less confidence in God than God has in Himself, for they think that the success of the divine plan depends (at least in part) upon the will of man. They do not understand that even man's will was created by God and is, therefore, subject to—and subservient to—God's will.

So when the seventh angel proclaims that the world kingdom has come under the dominion of Jesus Christ, it is simply a revelation of the divine plan from the beginning. Though men and their beast nations have been raised up, like

Pharaoh, to resist God's will for a time ([Rom. 9:17](#)), not even Pharaoh could resist God's plan. Paul asks in [Rom. 9:19](#), "for who resists His plan?" Here Paul uses the word *boulema*, not *thelema*. [Rom. 9:16](#) says,

¹⁶ So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy.

The Elders in Agreement

John continues in [Rev. 11:16](#), [17](#), [18](#), with a restatement by the twenty-four elders:

¹⁶ And the twenty-four elders, who sit on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, ¹⁷ saying, "We give Thee thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who art and who wast, because Thou hast taken Thy great power and hast begun to reign. ¹⁸ And the nations were enraged, and Thy wrath came, and the time came for the dead to be judged, and the time to give their reward to Thy bond-servants the prophets, and to the saints and to those who fear Thy name, the small and the great, and to destroy those who destroy the earth."

These elders expand the message of the seventh angel. In fact, they help us interpret its meaning and implication. They thank God because He has "*begun to reign*." God has always reigned, of course, but this statement comes in the context of man's rebellion. Men and nations have usurped power, thinking God has given them ownership of His creation. But the seventh angel signals that the end of men's usurpation is in sight. The corner has been turned. Rightful dominion is about to be restored to the one true King who has proven His love for all of mankind.

The twenty-four elders tells us in verse 18 that "*the nations were enraged*" for losing their usurped sovereignty. They also see that "*the time came for the dead to be judged*." Again, the Great White Throne judgment was not to come until the end of the thousand years following the return of Christ, but the elders can already see it coming and treat it as an accomplished fact.

The elders also see rewards being given to the saints and prophets, as well as judgments upon "*those who destroy the earth*." Sin is always destructive in some way. Men are under the illusion that true freedom is having the right to sin, not realizing that sin enslaves them. God knows better and intends to set them free from such childish nonsense.

God's intent is to save the earth, while the rebellious systems of men work to destroy it. As we now approach the end of the age, the self-destructive governmental policies are becoming more and more obvious to those who have insight into such things. Scientists are hired to genetically modify food in order to promote ill health, and to destroy biodiversity which is viewed as a competitor. Science has created the means to destroy the earth many times over. By normalizing homosexual behavior instead of finding ways to heal it, men again promote death. There is even an agenda that promotes killing 90% of humanity in order to "save the earth from humans."

All of these and more are the results of man's rebellion against God's right to rule what He has created. Men's disagreement with God's law is the path of death. Moses told Israel in [Deut. 30:15-19](#),

¹⁵ See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, and death and adversity; ¹⁶ in that I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, that you may live and multiply, and that the Lord your God may bless you in the land where you are entering to possess it... ¹⁹ I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants.

Heaven and earth are the ultimate manifestation of the two witnesses. When the earth bears witness to the decrees of heaven, then all things are established in earth as in heaven.

Chapter 14: The Heavenly Temple Opened

When the seventh angel blew his trumpet in [Rev. 11:15](#), we are given immediately a picture of the end (or result), even though all of those events have yet to be worked out on the earth. From the heavenly standpoint, the work is successfully accomplished, but we must understand that the trumpet is a divine decree that must yet be carried out. In other words, the decree is a promise that cannot fail, and all of the earlier trumpets and their corresponding earthly events have laid the foundations for the overthrow of all usurpers.

[Revelation 11:19](#) then says,

¹⁹ And the temple of God which is in heaven was opened; and the ark of His covenant appeared in His temple, and there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder and an earthquake and a great hailstorm. ¹ And a great sign appeared in heaven ...

The implication is that prior to the coronation of Jesus Christ as King of Creation, the heavenly temple was CLOSED. But when the temple doors were opened, “*the ark of His covenant appeared*,” that is, it was revealed for all to see. The Greek word is *horao*, “to see with the eyes.” Furthermore, when the temple is opened, a great sign appears in the heavens, which is the subject of Revelation 12. It is the woman clothed with the sun. The “and” in [Rev. 12:1](#) is a Hebraic connector, commonly used throughout the Old Testament, which in this case links the open temple to the sign of the woman.

Although the heavenly temple is opened here, the ark itself remains closed until we see it opened in [Rev. 15:5, 6](#),

⁵ After these things I looked, and the temple of the tabernacle of testimony in heaven was opened, ⁶ and the seven angels who had the seven plagues came out of the temple.

These seven angels are assigned to pour out the seven bowls of wine over Babylon in the final overthrow of that great city. During the interim between the opening of the temple and the opening of the ark, we see many events take place in chapters 12–14. These events are all part of the seventh trumpet, but do not yet overthrow Babylon.

The Feast of Trumpets

Opening the temple in heaven is an event associated with the feast of Trumpets (Rosh Hoshana) which was held on the first day of the seventh month. How do we know?

The basic structure of the book of Revelation is founded on the Hebrew calendar, which is marked off in sevens. Every seven years there is a Sabbath rest year. During that Sabbath year are twelve months, each of which began when the watchmen sighted the first crescent moon over the horizon at sunset. When the moon was sighted, the trumpet was blown to signal the start of the first day (evening) of the next month ([Num. 10:10](#)).

The first trumpet, then, was blown on the first day of the first month, and the seventh trumpet was blown on Rosh Hoshana ([Lev. 23:24](#)), the first day of the seventh month. Rosh Hoshana, however, was more important than other first days of the month, because it was considered to be the first day of creation—the birth of the earth itself. It was also believed to be the day when, in the future, the dead would be raised. Hence, “the last trumpet” in [1 Thess. 4:16](#) was the seventh trumpet, the last to mark the progression of months leading to the final Mosaic feast, the feast of Tabernacles.

During the feast of Tabernacles in the seventh month (trumpet), they were to pour out a drink offering on each of the seven days of Tabernacles ([Num. 29:19, 22, 25](#), etc.). These are the seven bowls of wine poured out during the time of the seventh trumpet (month).

So we see that the *seven seals* in the book of Revelation represent the seven years of a Sabbath cycle. The *seven trumpets* come in the seventh seal, because these are prophesied in the seven months of that Sabbath year. Finally, the *seven bowls* of wine in Revelation 16 are prophesied by the seven drink offerings in the feast of Tabernacles which falls in the seventh month.

Seeing this gives us the context of the seventh trumpet in the prophetic structure of Revelation. It is meant to portray the prophecy of Rosh Hoshana, which in turn leads to the feast of Tabernacles and the ultimate collapse of Babylon on the eighth day of Tabernacles.

The Storm

Opening the temple sets off a spiritual “storm,” complete with lightning, thunder, hail, and even an earthquake. (The editors of *The Emphatic Diaglott* tell us that the Vatican Manuscript omits “*and an earthquake*,” but Panin’s *Numeric English New Testament* includes this phrase. Panin’s study of the text shows that it is necessary to include it in order to retain the numerical patterns that are built into the text itself.)

Lightning is called God’s “arrows” ([Psalm 77:17](#)), and arrows are also sons ([Psalm 127:4](#)). Hence, lightning represents the sons of God. God’s voice is heard in the “thunder” ([Psalm 77:18](#); [2 Sam. 22:14](#); [John 12:29](#)), and because thunder is the sound of lightning, what is pictured is the voice of God speaking through His sons.

As the sons of God give voice to the divine decrees which they hear from the throne (ark) in the heavenly temple, the judgments of God overrule the objections of the beast governments that have usurped the earth. As these forces of darkness are pushed back one decree at a time, the time eventually arrives for the saints to take their rightful places and to possess the Kingdom.

Spiritual “hail” is Truth, for we read in [Isaiah 28:17](#) that “*hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies*.” This hail of truth comes from the sons of God, as the decrees of God thunder from their mouths. When men’s governments are overthrown, Scripture pictures this as earthquakes.

All of this is pictured in [Rev. 11:19](#) in order to set us up for the next event in chapter 12. Opening the temple in heaven reveals the woman clothed with the sun, and, in fact, this appears to be the message coming from the sons of God in the lightning and thunder. In fact, the twelfth chapter depicts the twelfth letter of the Hebrew alphabet (*lamed*), which literally is an ox goad representing *authority*. Revelation 12, then, is about the conflict over who has legitimate authority over the earth.

The Book of Judges

The book of Judges tells us how God raised up certain “judges” (or “saviors, deliverers”) to set Israel free from six different captivities in its history in the old land. These captivities occurred after the death of Joshua but before the coronation of King Saul. God took credit for all of these captivities, telling us that captivity was a divine judgment upon the nation for its lawlessness.

When Israel repented and returned to God and His law, then God raised up a “judge” to deliver them.

There were six captivities and six judges who delivered Israel during this time. Their names are prophetic, for when we string them together, a prophecy emerges as a hidden message.

Othniel ([Judges 3:9](#)) means “the force or power of God.”

Ehud ([Judges 3:15](#)) means “united.”

Barak ([Judges 4:6](#)) means “lightning.” He delivered Israel with the help of Deborah, whose name means “a bee.”

Gideon ([Judges 6:11](#)) means “a feller (of trees); warrior.”

Jephthah ([Judges 11:1](#)) means “he will open.”

Samuel and the Ark itself delivered Israel in [1 Sam. 6, 7](#). First, the Ark overthrew the god of the Philistines ([1 Sam. 5:11](#)), and so, after holding the ark for seven months (6:1), they sent it back to Israel during the time of wheat harvest (6:13). In other words, the ark was in the hands of the Philistines from Tabernacles to Pentecost.

The Pentecostal Israelites (wheat gatherers) opened the ark to see if the tables of the law and the hidden manna were still in it (6:19), not realizing that they were not qualified to open the ark or even to touch it. Many died as a result. Finally, in [1 Sam. 7:6](#) the prophet led the people in a prayer of repentance and then led them to victory in a battle against the Philistines (7:10).

This is a brief summary of the prophetic events in the book of Judges up to the time of Samuel, who then anointed Saul as king.

Othniel’s name, when viewed in the context of the next two judges, indicates thunder, which is the voice, force, or power of God. Hence, by stringing the meaning of all their names together, we read: **The Voice of God united in His sons (and daughters such as Deborah) will fell the enemy and will open the ark.**

What is particularly interesting in this sequence is that Jephthah was born illegitimately ([Judges 11:1](#)), and yet he was called as a judge. The circumstances of his birth, along with his name, suggest a deeper prophecy that runs parallel with the actions of those Israelites who opened the ark without authorization. The wheat-gatherers were types of Pentecostals, who are not allowed to open the ark, for one must be of the feast of Tabernacles to be a true son of God.

While this story is an aside from the main flow, it nonetheless gives us an important lesson. Furthermore, it also shows us why the ark in heaven is not opened until [Rev. 15:5](#). The chapters prior to this verse speak of church history during the Age of Pentecost. The ark could not be opened until the time of the end when the sons of God, empowered by Tabernacles, were qualified to look into the ark that was opened in heaven.

Therefore, we can say that when [Rev. 11:19](#) pictures the temple being opened, it is in preparation for the next step, when the ark was to be opened in [Rev. 15:5](#). The interim between these two events is designed, in part, to bring forth qualified sons of God to look into the opened ark, see and understand the tables of the law and the hidden manna.

Qualifications for Opening the Ark

The law and the hidden manna are revealed together, for both are contained within the ark, which is the throne of God. This was the specific reward given to the overcomers of Pergamum, for [Rev. 2:17](#) says, “*To him who overcomes, to him I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone.*” In this sense, the manna, which was “*as coriander seed*” ([Exodus 16:31](#)) and the white stone of the law represent the contents of the ark of the covenant.

The manna, pictured as “seed,” is the message of sonship—how to be begotten of God by the seed of the gospel through the work of the Holy Spirit. We read of this in [1 Peter 1:23–25](#),

²³ for you have been begotten [gennao] not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and abiding word of God. ²⁴ For [quoting [Isaiah 40:6–8](#)] “All flesh is like grass, and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls off, ²⁵ but the word of the Lord abides forever.” And this is the word which was preached to you.

Sonship messages have been preached without the law for a long time, and the law has been preached apart from an understanding of sonship. The former results in lawless grace, while the latter creates barren, legalistic religion. Together, however, the law and the hidden manna bring the revelation of truth that can produce the fruits of righteousness for the Kingdom.

Chapter 15: The Woman and Her Son

When the temple in heaven was opened, thunder, lightning, hail, an earthquake, and a sign in heaven were all seen as a result. The sign was that of Virgo bringing forth a son and the conflict with a great dragon. [Rev. 12:1, 2](#) says,

¹ And a great sign appeared in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars; ² and she was with child; and she cried out, being in labor and in pain to give birth.

This is one of the most striking references in the book of Revelation to the constellations in the heavens, which were perhaps the oldest prophecies on record. These heavenly signs date back to [Gen. 1:14](#),

¹⁴ Then God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night, and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years.”

What is a Sign?

A sign is something that is appointed to represent something else. The Hebrew word used here is (???) *owth*, whose root word, spelled with the same letters, but pronounced differently, is *uwth*. Hebrew root words are always verbs, and in this case, *uwth* means “to consent or agree.” In other words, a sign is something that provides a double witness that is in agreement with something else.

Both the verb root and its noun form are spelled with three Hebrew letters: the first (*alef*), the last (*tav*), and in the middle a *vav*, which is a connector that means a nail or peg and is often translated “and.” When Hebrew writing starts a sentence with “and,” it is normally written with a *vav*. In other words, a sign (*owth*) expresses the truth that God is the first and the last. This is the thought expressed in the Hebrew word for a sign.

By extension, this conveys the truth that God knows the end from the beginning. Because He is at both ends of history at the same time, He stands outside of time and directs history with an advantage over those who are limited by time.

The Constellation Virgo

John sees the constellation Virgo appear in the heavens. It is one of the signs that God not only created, but also *named* ([Psalm 147:4](#)) for the purpose of expressing the gospel story. Not only this sign, but all of them silently speak the gospel to the whole earth, David tells us in [Psalm 19:1–4](#),

¹ The heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. ² Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. ³ There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard. ⁴ Their line has gone out through all the earth, and their utterances to the end of the world ...

The statement in verse 1 that is underlined (above) carries a numeric value of 888, which is the same as *Jesus* in Greek. Whether this refers to Christ as the One declaring the glory of God, or just the heavens declaring Christ as the glory of God, we cannot say for certain. In my view, it is both, for the gospel of Christ is what has been preached to the whole world from the beginning of time. Thus also Paul references this in [Rom. 10:18](#), saying,

¹⁸ But I say, surely they have never heard, have they? Indeed they have: “Their voice has gone out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.”

The gospel was expressed in the heavens and was known, more or less, to all cultures at the beginning. It was the first Universal Bible, written as signs, prophesying of the divine plan to send His Son through a Virgin, who would give His life to save the world. The truth in the stars and constellations diminished over time and was often changed,

perverted, and misused by astrologers, but what men did with the truth did not eliminate its original message nor diminish its value.

The heavens are divided into twelve main signs with three lesser constellations supporting each of the twelve. Hence, there are really 48 constellation signs which preach the gospel in picture form. So Virgo, the Virgin, is supported by three others (called Decans). The first is Coma, the Infant, revealed by the names of the stars within that constellation, whose names mean *The Branch* and *The Desired One*.

The second Decan is the Centaur, who depicts the two natures of Christ—half man, half horse. Third is Bootes, or Arcturus, the Great Shepherd and Harvester, holding a rod and sickle. Bootes is the main subject of [Rev. 14:14–17](#), where Christ is pictured having “*a sharp sickle in His hand*” with which He reaps the earth.

It is not feasible to give a complete study of the gospel in the stars, nor have I had the time to write such a book myself. There are other books written about this, including E. Raymond Capt’s book, *The Glory of the Stars*; Joseph Seiss’ book, *The Gospel in the Stars*; and Dr. E. W. Bullinger’s book, *The Witness of the Stars*. If you have *The Companion Bible*, you may look up Dr. Bullinger’s summary of the Constellations and their gospel message in Appendix 12.

Coma, the Virgin’s Son

The sign of Virgo, accompanied by Coma, her Infant, is the main focus of [Rev. 12:1, 2](#). It is where the star-gospel begins. While some Christian theologians may argue whether Mary was a virgin or just a young woman, all of the traditions of every culture emphasize the virginity of the woman in the heavens. This truth was universally understood from the beginning. Seiss tells us,

*“A hundred years before Christ an altar was found in Gaul with this inscription: “To the virgin who is to bring forth.” And this maiden in the sign is the holder and bringer of an illustrious Seed. In her hand is the Spica, the ear of wheat, the best of seed, and that spica indicated by the brightest star in the whole constellation. (*The Gospel in the Stars*, p. 28)*

Jesus Himself referenced this theme and applied it to Himself in [John 12:24](#),

²⁴ Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains by itself alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

The Virgin carries a branch in her other hand, which is another sign of the Messiah. [Isaiah 4:2](#) calls the Messiah *the Branch* (Hebrew: *Zemach*), saying,

² In that day the Branch of the Lord will be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth will be the pride and the adornment of the survivors of Israel.

Likewise, Zechariah prophesies to Joshua the high priest (one of the two witnesses in his time), “*I am going to bring in My servant the Branch*” ([Zech. 3:8](#)). Again, [Zech. 6:12](#) says,

¹² Then say to him, “Thus says the Lord of hosts, ‘Behold, a man whose name is Branch, for He will branch out from where He is; and He will build the temple of the Lord’.”

Coma, the Infant, was also known as The Desired One. In Egypt the child was called *Shes-nu*, “the desired son.” This is referenced in [Hag. 2:7 \(KJV\)](#), which says,

⁷ “And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come; and I will fill this house with glory,” saith the Lord of hosts.

The Greeks later changed Coma from the Desired Son to a bundle of hair. Seiss explains this:

“The Greeks knew not how to translate it, and hence took Coma in the sense of their own language, and called it hair—Berenice’s Hair. The story is that that princess gave her hair, the color of gold, as a votive offering for the safety of her brother; which hair disappeared. The matter was explained by the assurance that it was taken to heaven to shine in the constellation of Coma. Hence we have a bundle of woman’s hair in the place of ‘the Desire of all nations’.” (p. 29)

Haggai’s reference to “the desire of all nations” carries a numeric value of 528, which, on the Solfeggio music scale, is the frequency of love and healing. It is believed to heal DNA. It is *mi* on the scale (as in do, re, mi), which is short for the *miracle* note or tone. Dr. Leonard Horowitz calls it the “musical mathematical matrix of creation.”

The Hebrew word *maphteach*, “key,” has a numeric value of 528. It is the “key” of David in [Isaiah 22:22](#). David’s name means “love.” All of these things point to the fact that Coma is a picture of Jesus Christ who was born of a virgin and is the Desire of all nations.

Clothed with the Sun

Each year as the sun appears to move through the constellations, Virgo is said to be “clothed with the sun” for a month beginning in late August. The sun normally transits Virgo from August 23 to September 22. For this reason, John’s terminology in [Rev. 12:1, 2](#) pictures an event taking place during this time of year. It shows that Mary did not go into labor in December, but in September.

While this sign is seen every year, only rarely does it happen in conjunction with “*the moon under her feet*.” This sign actually occurred four years in a row: September 15, 1996, October 2, 1997, September 21, 1998, and September 11, 1999. The moon appeared to pass from Virgo’s womb to her feet. You may view charts from 1996 and 1999 here:

<http://sonstoglory.com/Revelation12starSignBirth.htm>

We took note of this occurrence at the time and were led to hold prayer campaigns which we called “Dragon wars.” When the Virgo sign culminated in 1999, we were led to hold a prayer campaign called *Dragon’s End*. I wrote about this in [chapter 21](#) of my book, [The Wars of the Lord](#).

The Virgo sign is also of interest to us, because the signs occurred immediately after we were led to declare the 120th Jubilee from Adam on September 22, 1996. Over all, I believe that John’s revelation spoke of our time, specifically from 1996–1999, ending on the 2000th anniversary of Jesus’ birth in 1999. (Jesus was born in September of 2 B.C., but because there was no Year 0, it was 2000 years from 2 B.C. to 1999 A.D.)

I believe that the temple was opened in 1996, and that the sign of Virgo was then seen in the heavens. In 1999 we completed the second “day” (2000 years) since Jesus’ birth, and we entered into the beginning of the third day prophesied in [Hosea 6:2](#),

² He will revive us after two days; He will raise us up on the third day that we may live before Him.

It appears from these great signs that appeared in Virgo from 1996–1999 that we are living in the beginning of the third day, and that we should watch for the resurrection of the dead in conjunction with the coming of Christ.

Chapter 16: The Sign of the Dragon

The seventh angel in [Rev. 11:15](#) announced the Kingdom and the rule of Jesus Christ, even though it had not yet become an accomplished fact. From this we see that the sign of the temple being opened, along with the sign of the woman giving birth, is not to be ascribed to the end of the sixth trumpet, but to the end of the seventh.

The woman sign was literally fulfilled in the heavens from 1996–1999, when the moon passed through Virgo from her womb to her feet during the month when she was clothed with the sun. Each year the moon was positioned more perfectly until the climax in 1999. It was reported at the time that this was the first time in known history that this had happened. Greg Killian wrote on his website at the time:

“This particular positioning of the mazzaroth (constellation) Bethulah, the virgin, about to give ‘birth’ to the moon (the messiah) has never occurred before, and will never occur again, due to the precession of the equinoxes.”

Hence, it is not hard to conclude that this was specifically the event that John saw in his revelation of the sign leading to the establishment of the Kingdom. The fulfillment of the sign took place immediately after we were led to declare the Jubilee on Sept. 23, 1996. That declaration, of course, is another story—too long to tell here. The actual 120th Jubilee from Adam, we believe, was supposed to be declared in October of 1986, but (like Isaiah did in the time of Hezekiah) we were able to do so ten years late and apply it retroactively. We call this the Hezekiah Factor after discovering it in October of 1994—long before we knew that the Virgo sign would be seen soon.

The point is that immediately after making this declaration, Virgo seemed to give birth to the moon four years in a row—for the first and last time in history. This suggests that we are coming to the *end* of the time of the seventh trumpet, and that the Kingdom of Christ is even now being established. But this great event in history comes not without opposition.

The Dragon Wars

[Rev. 12:3, 4](#) introduces us to “a great red dragon” in the heavens:

³ And another sign appeared in heaven; and behold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on its heads were seven diadems. ⁴ And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven, and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth, he might devour her child.

This dragon is another sign in the heavens, known as *Draco*, which encircles about a third of the heavens. Draco’s constellation is one of the three decans of Sagittarius, the Archer, who represents Christ in His triumph over Draco. Draco’s brightest star is called Thuban, “the subtle,” which is a reminder of the statement in [Gen. 3:1 \(KJV\)](#), “*the serpent was more subtil [or subtle] than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made.*” About 4,600 years ago Thuban was the Polar Star, but today it has been replaced by Polaris. Over time, the earth’s orientation has shifted away from Draco’s brightest star, Thuban.

In Hebrew thought, an “archer” (*moreh*) is a teacher, because he “hits the mark” with true teaching.

An archer-teacher has students, or spiritual sons, who are his “arrows.” Christ is the Teacher of Righteousness in [Joel 2:23](#),

²³ So rejoice, O sons of Zion, and be glad in the Lord your God; for He has given you the early rain [moreh] for your vindication [Zadok], and He has poured down for you the rain, the early and latter rain as before.

An alternate rendering of the underline phrase above is: “*He has given you the Teacher of Righteousness.*” This was a common theme in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

“The phrase moreh (ha)zedeq, Teacher of Righteousness, occurs seven times in the Habakkukk pesher.”

<http://www.world-destiny.com/teachright.html>

In fact, this was how the Sadducees understood this phase in [Joel 2:23](#), for they believed that their founder, a man named Zadok, which means “righteousness,” was this prophesied Teacher of Righteousness. (There were two groups of Sadducees, those deemed “corrupt” who served in the Jerusalem temple and the Purist Sadducees of the Qumran community near the Dead Sea.)

This Teacher of Righteousness, mentioned in [Joel 2:23](#), was also called the “Fountain of Righteousness,” because *moreh* can be translated as rain, archer, or teacher. The connection between these alternate meanings of the word can be seen also in [Job 29:20–23](#),

²⁰ My glory is ever new with me, and my bow is renewed in my hand. ²¹ To me they listened and waited, and kept silent for my counsel. ²² After my words they did not speak again, and my speech dropped on them. ²³ And they waited for me as for the rain, and opened their mouth as for the spring rain.

We see here the picture of students waiting to hear the “counsel” of the teacher, as men wait for the rain. The teacher is pictured with a bow in his hand, as if he is an archer, but his words are like rain.

So we see Sagittarius the Archer triumphant over Draco. The Dragon Wars that we fought by spiritual warfare from 1996–1999 lasted about 3½ years. The main battles were divided into three rounds, one per year, in 1997, 1998, and 1999. The warfare ended with a final battle which we called “Dragon’s End.” It was fought from August 19 to September 2, 1999, just before Jesus’ 2000th birthday, which, in 1999, fell on September 11/12.

The Red Dragon at Jesus’ Birth

[Revelation 12:5](#) says,

⁵ And she gave birth to a son, a male child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up to God and to His throne.

The original pattern was seen clearly when King Herod attempted to kill Jesus when he was about three months old. Jesus was born on the feast of Trumpets, September 29, 2 B.C., and the wise men arrived around December 25 of that year when Jupiter hovered over Bethlehem (as viewed from Jerusalem). The wise men had followed Jupiter’s westward movement ever since it had “crowned” Regulus, the great star that is positioned between the feet of Leo, the lion.

Regulus, is the “regulator,” called the “Lawgiver” between the feet of the lion in [Gen. 49:10 \(KJV\)](#). The wise men (magi) had learned about this prophecy from Daniel some centuries earlier, so when they saw Jupiter, the King’s Planet, perform a loop over Regulus, they saw this as the sign of the Messiah’s birth.

When the magi arrived in Jerusalem, they inquired of King Herod about the Messiah that had been born. Herod was alarmed and told them that if they found Him, they should report back to him. The magi did find Jesus, but they returned to their country by another route. King Herod then killed the children in Bethlehem, but Joseph and Mary, being forewarned, had already taken Jesus to safety in Egypt.

Herod was half-Idumean (i.e., Edomite). Edom means “red.” He was the manifestation of the red dragon at that time, attempting to “*devour her child*.” John does not attempt to give an account of the full story of Christ’s birth and life, but says only that He was “*caught up to God and to His throne*.” The Greek word translated “caught up” is *harpazo*,

which is the word used in [1 Thess. 4:17](#) that is commonly thought of as “the rapture.” It is an ascension, and in the case of Jesus Christ, it is an ascension to the throne.

After this, the woman flees into the wilderness, and the war between Michael and the dragon takes place.

Chapter 17: The Woman in the Wilderness

The signs in the heavens depict many snapshots of the gospel message and prophecies of conflict between Christ and His enemies. Each sign reveals a different aspect of the story. Draco reveals the more fundamental, spiritual conflict, which manifests through his proxies as earthly events. There is no question, however, that the serpent in [Gen. 3:1](#) is revealed by the constellation Draco and that this is the same enemy that is pictured in Revelation 12.

The constellation Orion, for example, pictures Christ victorious over the enemy. Seiss tells us that His name means “*He who cometh forth as light, the Brilliant, the Swift*” (p. 105). His right foot is lifted and poised to crush the enemy. In his foot is the bright star of the first magnitude, Rigel, which means “*the foot that crushes*.” All of this pictures the prophecy in [Gen. 3:15](#),

¹⁵ And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.

While most of the constellations picture this spiritual battle in terms of actual warfare, there is a deeper significance to these war metaphors. Sagittarius, as we have seen, is not only an archer who might kill with physical arrows, but is also a Teacher of Righteousness whose arrows are “sons” that are trained to speak the truth in love to counter the subtle deceptions of the serpent, or Draco.

In the constellation of Libra, the Scales of Justice, we find three decans to support it: the Southern Cross, the Victim (Lupus), and the Northern Crown. Seiss tells us about the Southern Cross, or Crux:

“Formerly this constellation was visible in our latitudes; but in the gradual shifting of the heavens it has long since sunk away to the southward. It was last seen in the horizon of Jerusalem about the time that Christ was crucified” (p. 37).

This constellation now is pictured on the flag of New Zealand as a testimony of the death of Christ on the cross. Its sister nation, Australia, was originally called *Australia del Espiritu Santo*, “Southland of the Holy Spirit.” It was so named by a Portuguese sailor named Pedro Fernandez de Queiros, because he arrived there on Pentecost on May 3, 1606. According to his memoirs, entitled *The Voyages of Pedro Fernandez de Quiros*, he proclaimed:

“Be witness the heavens and the earth, and the sea, and all its inhabitants, and those who are present, that I, the Captain Pedro Fernandez de Quiros, in these parts which up to the present time have been unknown... take possession of all the ... lands that I have newly discovered... and all this region as far south as the Pole, which from this time shall be called Australia del Espiritu Santo.”

Hence, even as New Zealand is dedicated to remembering the Cross of Christ (Passover), so also is Australia dedicated to the Holy Spirit given to the church at Pentecost.

The Southern Cross is the key that balances the Scales of Justice for the world, and the Northern Crown is the reward procured by Christ’s sacrifice on the cross as Lupus, the Victim.

The Woman in the Wilderness

After the woman’s son ascends to the throne, [Rev. 12:6](#) says,

⁶ And the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God, so that there she might be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

Here we again see the same 1,260 “day” time cycle. It seems to correlate with the “forty-two months” of [Rev. 11:2](#), wherein the nations were treading down the Holy City. In long-term prophecy, this is 1,260 years and even double

that amount: 2,520 years (“seven times”). It is difficult to apply this particular prophecy, because all of the earlier biblical patterns give different lengths of time in the wilderness.

When Israel was delivered from Egypt under Moses, they “fled” into the wilderness, where they immediately came under attack by the Amalekites in [Exodus 17:8](#),

⁸ Then Amalek came and fought against Israel at Rephidim.

Amalek was the grandson of Esau and the son of Eliphaz ([Gen. 36:12](#)). In [Gen. 36:1](#) we read that Esau himself was nicknamed *Edom*, which means Red. Hence, when Amalek attacked the woman (Israel) at the start of her wilderness wandering, they showed that they—like King Herod the Edomite years later—were inspired by the red dragon. Amalek gives us an added feature showing the motive of their attack. Amalek’s father was *Eliphaz*, “my god is fine gold.” Having a love of money, the Amalekites wanted to steal the gold that Israel had gotten from Egypt.

Israel was the first Bride of Christ, for she was married to God at Mount Sinai with Moses officiating at the wedding. This marriage ended badly when God gave her a bill of divorce ([Jer. 3:8](#)) and sent her out of the house according to the law ([Deut. 24:1](#)). That marriage was based on an Old Covenant marriage contract. Even though Israel had been led out of the house of bondage (Egypt), she remained in spiritual bondage through the Old Covenant, because she was unable to keep her marriage vow ([Exodus 19:8](#)).

So a second marriage was necessary, one that was based on the New Covenant. The New Covenant was based on God’s vow ([Deut. 29:12–14](#)), so it was destined to succeed.

So we see portrayed in the constellations two women. The first is Andromeda, the chained woman in bondage, who represents Israel under the Old Covenant. The second is Cassiopeia, the woman set free and enthroned, who represents Israel under the New Covenant. Cassiopeia is a decan of Aries, the Ram, which pictures Christ as the sacrifice for sin. The Hebrew name for Aries is *Taleh*, “the lamb.”

It is by the death and resurrection of the Ram that Cassiopeia is set free and enthroned. So the brightest star in Aries is El-Nath, “wounded, slain,” and the next brightest star is Al Sharatan, “the bruised, or wounded.”

It is interesting that Andromeda, the chained woman, is a decan in the constellation of Pisces, the Two Fish that are bound together by another decan called “The Band.” The sign of the fish was universally used from the beginning to represent the church, because *ichthus* (Greek: “fish”) was the acronym for *Iesous Christos Theou Yios Soter*, “Jesus Christ, God’s Son, Savior.”

While much can be said about this, the main point for our purpose here is to connect Andromeda to Pisces. In spite of the fact that Christ’s death on the cross has set the woman free, most of the church has remained chained and enslaved in the house of bondage. Even as Israel under Moses had been set free from Egypt and yet remained in bondage on another level, so also has the church as a whole remained chained in bondage to the flesh, even though she was set free by the cross. Only the overcomers have been truly set free. In Moses’ day the overcomers were Caleb and Joshua. There are also New Testament overcomers, who are again a minority among Christians.

The woman in the wilderness in [Rev. 12:6](#) was forecasted by Israel’s 40 years in the wilderness under Moses prior to their entry into the fleshly kingdom (Canaan). A greater fulfillment of the same pattern is seen in the church that was led out of the house of bondage by one who was like Moses ([Acts 7:37](#)). The church’s wilderness experience was designed to last 40 Jubilee cycles (1,960 years), ending in 1993. This time frame also coincided with the time of the seven churches, ending with the start of the transfer of authority to the overcomers.

The problem is that neither Israel nor the church fled to the wilderness for 1,260 days or even 1,260 years. In fact, 1,260 is not even a multiple of 40. Therefore, this time period must be based on something else. It is also possible that we may yet see a literal, short-term 1,260-day prophetic period fulfilled in some way, but if so, it is hardly possible to know ahead of time how this might be fulfilled.

The Appointed Place

When Israel was at its height, God gave a startling word to King David in [2 Sam. 7:10, 11](#),

¹⁰ **I will also appoint a place for My people Israel and will plant them, that they may live in their own place and not be disturbed** [*ragaz*, “moved”] **again, nor will the wicked afflict them any more as formerly,**
¹¹ **even from the day that I commanded judges to be over My people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. The Lord also declares to you that the Lord will make a house for you.**

David may well have asked God, “*What about the place where we now live? What about the land of Canaan?*” But God spoke of another place, a place where they would be at rest. Israel was to be moved when God cast her out of the land and sent her into captivity in Assyria. This prophecy, then, must be fulfilled *after the Assyrian captivity*. In fact, if we apply this to Israel after the flesh, and to their descendants who immigrated into Europe after the fall of Assyria, they have had continuous wars and disturbances throughout their history.

Some believe that this “appointed place” was in far-off Britain. Others believe it was a reference to America and the New World. Perhaps there are elements of truth in this, but in the end, the only real place of “rest” is the spiritual “country” and “city” that Abraham sought. [Heb. 11:13–16](#) tells us,

¹³ **All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.** ¹⁴ **For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own.** ¹⁵ **And indeed if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return.** ¹⁶ **But as it is, they desire a better country, that is a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.**

There are two ways of applying this. First, when applied to the fleshly Israelites, the promise given to them was not the old land of Canaan, for God had appointed for them a new land. And so the Israelites immigrated north and west into Europe, rather than south to their old land. “*If they had been thinking of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return,*” but they had long forgotten the old land, for God had decreed this in [Hosea 2:6](#),

⁶ **Therefore, behold, I will hedge up her way with thorns, and I will build a wall against her so that she cannot find her paths.**

There was also a legal reason why Israel could not return. She had been given a bill of divorce and had been sent out of the house. So God tells Israel in [Hosea 2:2](#), “*she is not my wife, and I am not her husband.*” Once divorced, God sent Israel out of His house into the wilderness, which is mentioned by the prophet in [Hosea 2:14](#),

¹⁴ **Therefore, behold, I will allure her, bring her into the wilderness, and speak kindly to her.**

Hence, Israel is treated as a woman—a former wife—who has been sent out of the house according to the law, and brought “*into the wilderness.*” She follows the pattern set forth in [Rev. 12:6](#), but there is no specific time period given in Hosea’s prophecy. We are only told in [Hosea 2:16, 20](#), that the betrothal and subsequent remarriage takes place in the wilderness, i.e., not in the old land (Canaan/Palestine).

Further, it is understood that Israel and Judah will be united under “*one leader,*” that is Christ ([Hosea 1:11](#)), and that “*in the place where it is said to them, ‘You are not My people,’ it will be said to them, ‘You are the sons of the living God.’*” ([Hosea 1:10](#)). In other words, during Israel’s sojourn in the wilderness, they would be “not My people,” and yet there they would become “*the sons of the living God.*”

This promise can only be fulfilled through the provision of the New Covenant, and this new relationship with God comes not by fleshly birth, nor by the will of man, but of God ([John 1:12, 13](#)). No one, Israelite or otherwise, attains

such a position by fleshly birth, but only by being begotten by the Spirit through the seed of the gospel which begets us by faith in Christ ([1 Cor. 4:15 KJV](#)).

A profound change, then, occurs in the wilderness. Israel is transformed from fleshly to spiritual, from dependence upon fleshly birth to spiritual. Having been divorced, she was no different from the other nations, legally speaking. But when the regathering, the re-betrothal, and the remarriage takes place, the way is opened for all nations to come to Christ as equals. [Isaiah 56:6–8](#) says,

⁶ Also the foreigners who join themselves to the Lord... and holds fast My covenant, ⁷ Even those I will bring to My holy mountain and make them joyful in My house of prayer... For My house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples. ⁸ The Lord God, who gathers the dispersed of Israel, declares, “Yet others I will gather to them, to those already gathered.”

We see, then, that whereas the “woman in the wilderness” started out as natural Israel, she ends up as a multi-ethnic nation who all adhere to the New Covenant by faith in the same Christ. A great change takes place between the death and resurrection of Israel as a nation. It is sown as a natural body and raised as a spiritual body ([1 Cor. 15:44](#)). What started out as a small nation in the land of Canaan has been “sown” in “the field” (i.e., *the world*, [Matt. 13:38](#)) in order to obtain a greater harvest of sons.

Chapter 18: Perseus the Breaker

he prophecy of the woman in the wilderness in Revelation 12 serves two main purposes. First, it presents her as the mother of Jesus Christ, who was destined to be the King of all nations. Secondly, it presents the woman as the mother of the body of Christ—those who are destined to reign with Christ. But we must also look deeper and see the woman as the spiritual “*mother of all the living*”—a role first given to Eve in [Gen. 3:20](#).

Obviously, Eve was not the mother of all living creatures in a physical sense. She was not the mother of horses and cattle. But she represented the spiritual mother of all who were destined to be given life (immortality) at the end of time. So it is interesting to contrast her with Adam, because “*in Adam all die*” ([1 Cor. 15:22](#)).

Eve represented the same spiritual woman that Sarah represented. In the great allegory of Sarah and Hagar, explained by Paul in [Gal. 4:23–26](#), we see that Sarah represents the heavenly or spiritual Jerusalem that functions by the New Covenant, and that it is only by descent from Sarah that anyone can receive the promise of God. This is accomplished by spiritual begetting that comes by the Spirit, rather than by the flesh (that is, fleshly descent from Adam or Israel). The ultimate promise given to “Isaac” is immortality, or “life,” which is the same promise given to Eve.

In the same manner, Mary later played the role of Eve and Sarah, for in bringing forth Jesus, the Savior of all, she played the same role as her predecessors in this great allegory. So the woman in [Rev. 12:1](#) is a spiritual city represented by Mary, who brought forth the “*male child who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron*” ([Rev. 12:5](#)). Yet the prophecy is not complete with Mary, for the same spiritual woman gives birth to the sons of God. Mary herself could not do this.

The complication is in the fact that there are actually two women, not just one. Sarah and Hagar form the contrast in Paul’s allegory, the free woman and the bond woman, each producing a son. The son’s status depends not upon his father, but upon his mother, for to her was the original promise about being “*the mother of all the living*.”

God is the Father in this allegory, and one would think that His *fatherhood* would be sufficient to fulfill the promise. But the divine plan has taken an unusual twist, which shows the importance of the mother (and wife) in marriage. In the ultimate divine marriage between heaven and earth, the only way that the promise of God can be fulfilled is when the earth reflects the character of heaven so that the two may be “*one flesh*” ([Gen. 2:24](#)).

This divine marriage is pictured in two stages: first the Hagar stage, wherein we see the imperfect Old Covenant relationship, and later the Sarah stage, wherein we see the perfect New Covenant relationship. An Old Covenant bride must be told what to do, for she does not yet know the mind of God perfectly, nor is she capable of fulfilling the expectations of such a wife.

As long as we are merely born of flesh and blood, we are no different from a slave, even if our destiny is to be owner of everything ([Gal. 4:1](#)). It requires a second begetting, this time by the seed of the word (or gospel), in order to be an inheritor of the promise. Further, we must identify with that holy seed and be no longer dependent upon the identity of our first begetting. The *real you* must not be the flesh man, but the spiritual man, as Paul explains in [Rom. 7:20–22](#).

The Andromeda Church

All of this is pictured in the two constellations, Andromeda (the chained woman) and Cassiopeia, the enthroned free woman. Hence, when reading Revelation 12, we are compelled to view the sun-clothed woman as Cassiopeia, while the chained woman forms only the backdrop to the story. In one sense, there are two women to consider. In another sense, the two women are one, but represent two stages of development. At first she is chained, and later she is set free.

Seiss tells us about Andromeda, saying,

“Greek mythology calls this woman Andro-meda (andro-medo), man-ruler, but with what idea, or for what reason, does not appear in the myths” (p. 86).

Seiss identifies Andromeda with the church, but presents the church in terms of those called to rule and reign with Christ over men. In this he misses the mark, because the bondwoman is not called to rule, but to be ruled over. Her name signifies religious organizations ruling over men, but this is a problem portrayed in *“the teaching of the Nicolaitans”* ([Rev. 2:15](#)). Seiss does not have a clear revelation of sonship, for his book was first published in 1882, long before the Latter Rain movement (1948–1952) set forth and clarified the revelation of sonship.

Further, even to this day not many seem to have a clear understanding of the two ways to beget children, nor how these determine one’s “mother” (covenant). Most of the church still labors in bondage to Old Covenant ways, even though they believe sincerely that their mother is the New Covenant. They do not see religious, denominational leadership as being Hagar. They do not understand that whenever a religious organization takes the place of Christ and tells people that one must become a member of that organization in order to have a relationship with God—that church puts men into bondage to itself and can only bring forth Ishmaels. Like begets like.

For this reason, Scripture makes a distinction between the church and the remnant of grace (or overcomers). Hagar has many children; Sarah has few. But in the end, Sarah, *“the mother of all the living,”* will be the mother of all. All men are born as children of the flesh, but when the divine plan is complete, all men will be set free into the glorious liberty of the children of God ([Rom. 8:21](#)). *“As in Adam all die,”* that is, by our fleshly descent, *“so also in Christ all shall be made alive,”* that is, by our spiritual descent through Eve, *“the mother of all the living.”*

Perseus

The three decans of Aries, the Ram, are (1) Cassiopeia, the enthroned woman (2) Cetus, the sea monster, and (3) Perseus, the breaker of the power of the enemy to set the chained woman free.

Andromeda, chained, according to the myth, at Joppa (the city on the Palestinian coast) is thus threatened by Cetus, the sea monster. Perseus comes to save her, set her free, and then takes her as his bride. Of course, once she is set free, we must view her as Cassiopeia for the rest of the story.

Perseus is *the breaker*. The Hebrew word *peretz* or *peres* means “breaker, divider.” This is one of the key words in the handwriting on the wall at the time Persia took the city of Babylon ([Dan. 5:28](#)). At that time the writing was interpreted to mean: *“Your kingdom has been divided [broken up] and given over to the Medes and Persians.”* Perseus, who is pictured carrying a club, is the constellation for which *Persia* was named.

We see, then, how the story of Perseus was fulfilled historically in the overthrow of Babylon, the oppressor of Judah. King Cyrus the Persian was a type of Christ ([Isaiah 45:1](#)) coming as Perseus the breaker to overthrow Babylon, which manifested the spirit of Cetus, the sea monster. Cetus, in fact, will be discussed in more detail when we study the beast that rises from the sea in [Rev. 13:1](#).

We should also mention that Cetus figures prominently in the prophetic story of Jonah, who embarked on a ship from Joppa and was later swallowed by the sea monster (Cetus). After being vomited out upon dry land, he fulfilled his call to preach to Nineveh, “Fish City.” He had not wanted to preach to Nineveh, because that city was soon to be the great Fish (Cetus) that would swallow up the House of Israel ([Hosea 8:8, 9](#)). It is a fascinating story.

Bondage and the Wilderness

Though Israel was technically set free from the house of bondage (Egypt) at Passover, when Pharaoh allowed them to leave, the wilderness turned out to be just another form of bondage under the Old Covenant. The people were no longer slaves of Pharaoh, but they yet carried a slave mentality, which was not so easily resolved.

It is easier to take men out of Egypt than to take Egypt out of men. For this reason, the people often wanted to return to Egypt ([Exodus 14:12](#); [16:3](#); [Num. 11:20](#); [14:2–4](#); [20:5](#), etc.).

Israel had a love-hate relationship with Egypt. They did not like to be in bondage, but neither did they know how to be truly free. True freedom can come only through the New Covenant. The New Covenant was offered to them at Sinai, but the people refused to hear His voice and to draw near to God ([Exodus 20:18–21](#)). Instead, they desired a man to represent them before God, thereby putting themselves under men's leadership, rather than directly under God.

The same problem occurred years later when the people demanded a king. God gave them Saul, the best in the land, but He told Samuel, "*they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them*" ([1 Sam. 8:7](#)). This was the same bondage mentality that their fathers had when they stood at the base of the Mount. It is not likely that either generation knew what they were doing, for they had no way to understand the two covenants as we do today.

Israel's wilderness experience, then, was another form of bondage, for as Paul said, the nation had been formed at Mount Sinai (Hagar) in Arabia (Ishmael's inheritance). They were yet of the flesh, even though they had been released at Passover. Hence, a greater fulfillment lay ahead, when one like Moses would be raised up to lead them out of the greater house of bondage—the house of flesh ruled by the law of sin.

Christ's death on the cross at the feast of Passover set them free from the bondage of sin and death. However, the church again went into its own wilderness. Though some truly experienced freedom in Christ, the majority retained the same slave mentality that was ingrained in the Israelites under Moses. The only real difference between that first church under Moses and the church under Christ is that the time was extended from 40 years to 40 Jubilees, so it took somewhat longer for the denominational spirit to develop and to enslave the people.

Hence, Scripture shows that there is a second coming of Christ—this time with Christ coming as *Perseus*—to break the slavery of Babylon and to restore the earth to the freedom of the children of God. This is prophesied in [Micah 2:13](#),

¹³ **The breaker [peres] goes up before them; they break out [peres], pass through the gate, and go out by it. So their king goes on before them, and the Lord at their head.**

In our time, Cetus, the sea monster, is both civil and religious Babylon. It is the national bondage of human governments as well as the religious bondage of human denominations. This deliverance will be the fourth fulfillment of the promise of deliverance (Moses, Cyrus, and twice for Jesus Christ in His two comings). Each of the previous patterns are different, but yet they are the same, so we may study the past to understand the future.

However, John then adds another flavor of understanding by revealing the war between Michael and the red dragon.

Chapter 19: The Accuser Thrown out of Court

[Revelation 12:7, 8](#) says,

⁷ And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. And the dragon and his angels waged war, ⁸ and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven.

John was referring first and foremost to the heavenly battle written pictorially in the night sky and supported by the names of the constellations and individual stars within each. Whether the sign of the deliverer is Sagittarius the Archer, or Cepheus the Royal Branch, or Orion the Bright Coming King, or Hercules the Strong Man, or Ophiuchus the man grasping the serpent, they all speak of Christ who was to come as the great Deliverer.

Michael

John speaks of “*Michael and his angels*” fighting the war against the dragon. This is peculiarly a Hebrew revelation, for we do not see in the stars anyone named Michael. The only real connection is when we understand that Michael means one “who is like God.” In a sense, all of the men pictured as Christ in the constellations are “like God.” But Michael is the divine agent of deliverance in biblical history.

Michael is the counterpart and the natural enemy of the red dragon, even as Peniel is the counterpart and the natural enemy of the Prince of Persia. Each of the archangels (if not others) have specific assignments and callings to overthrow and bind their enemy counterparts. Peniel, the Angel of His Presence (or *Face*), was the original angel that led Israel out of Egypt ([Isaiah 63:9](#)), but when Israel rebelled by worshiping the golden calf, he was replaced by another angel ([Exodus 33:2, 3](#)). Hence, later we read that Michael is “*the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people*” ([Dan. 12:1](#)).

John, then, identifies Michael as the deliverer in Revelation 12. He is the angel that led Israel after worshiping the golden calf in the wilderness. He is the angel that has led the church in the wilderness during the past 2,000 years as well. Furthermore, because the serpent was present at the beginning of creation, Michael’s work was necessary from the start, when God first named the stars and placed the picture of the great serpent in the heavens.

So we find very early the belief that Satan, or Lucifer, rebelled and was cast out of heaven. It was believed that the battle in the heavens was very ancient and not merely consigned to the future. Yet because the battle continues until the final victory and resolution, we can see this battle playing out in the time interim, such as in the time of Moses, when Amalek attacked Israel. Later, at Christ’s first coming, King Herod, the Red Edomite, played the earthly role of the red dragon as the church fled into the wilderness.

In the big picture, we are now positioned at the end of the age, when we ought to see the dragon overcome. Indeed, we fought the “Dragon Wars” for about 3½ years from 1996–1999 when Virgo, clothed with the sun, seemed to give birth to the moon as it moved from her womb to her feet. Will there be further fulfillments of this? Perhaps, but they say that the signs which were seen in 1996–1999 will not be repeated, at least not in the foreseeable future.

The Victory

We have seen victories over the dragon in each of the past examples. The serpent was judged in the garden ([Gen. 3:14, 15](#)), and yet there was a prophecy of a future judgment when the seed of the woman would bruise his head. So when Christ came and died on the cross, His heel was bruised, so to speak, but in emerging from the tomb, He was victorious over death and bruised the head of the great dragon.

This scene is perhaps pictured most clearly in the constellation Hercules, the Strong Man. He is pictured kneeling on one knee with his foot lifted as if bruised, while his other foot is on the head of the dragon. The brightest star in the

head of Hercules is *Ras al Gethi*, “the head of him who bruises.” Clearly, the divine message tells us that the Strong Man is Jesus Christ who has bruised the head of the serpent.

Unfortunately, even though other nations and religions had been given the gospel in the stars, they did not know how it was fulfilled in Christ until the apostles were sent out to tell them the good news. Many parts of the world did not receive this good news for centuries, and many still remain in the dark.

[Revelation 12:9–11](#) says,

⁹ And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

¹⁰ And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, “Now the salvation, and the power [*dunamis*], and the kingdom of our God and the authority [*exousia*] of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, who accuses them before our God day and night. ¹¹ And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even to death.”

Here the great dragon is identified with “*the serpent of old*,” the same as the tempter in the garden ([Gen. 3:1](#)). This serpent is “*called the devil and Satan*.” The Greek word for “devil” is *diabolos*, “false accuser, slanderer.” Satan is an Aramaic word (*satanas*) transliterated directly in Greek, which means “an adversary.” The serpent is both an accuser and an adversary (prosecutor) in the divine court. John says he “*accuses them before our God day and night*,” that is, continuously.

Hence, when the accuser is “*thrown down to the earth*,” it means he is thrown out of the divine court. His case against “*our brethren*” has been rejected or denied. The adversary’s calling is to accuse us, using our sin and imperfections against us in court. Under normal circumstances, the accuser has a case against us, for all have broken the law of God. However, after the Child of the woman has been born, and after His ascension to the throne, the dragon’s case against us carries no merit. [1 John 2:1](#), [2](#) says,

¹ My little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; ² and He Himself is the propitiation [expiation] for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.

An Advocate is a defense attorney, the one called to defend those who are accused by the prosecutor (devil). The blood of Christ, who paid for all sin by His death on the cross, removed the devil’s grounds for accusation. When Christ took upon Himself the sin of the world ([John 1:29](#)), He became the Victim of all sin ever committed. This gave Him the right as a victim either to hold men accountable or to forgive and release them.

While yet on the cross, He chose to forgive ([Luke 23:34](#)). Hence, even though He has also held men accountable—and will yet do so at the Great White Throne—those who are judged will also be saved in the end when all sin (debt) is canceled at the great Jubilee. God holds men accountable as a way to bring men to repentance and to train them as they grow to spiritual maturity. In the end, this time of judgment is limited by the law of Jubilee, and for this reason the Scriptures tell us that the time of judgment is *aionian*, “pertaining to an age.”

Though some translations have mistranslated this word as “eternal” and “forever,” in the end, the devil has been cast down, and Jesus Christ has become “*the Savior of all men*” ([1 Tim. 4:10](#)).

Salvation Has Come

[Rev. 12:10](#) thus tells us that “salvation” has come. Although this is written in Greek, we must understand this with the Hebrew mindset. Jesus’ Hebrew name, *Yeshua*, means “salvation,” and so His name is both Jesus and salvation itself. All of the Old Testament references to salvation (*yasha*, *yeshua*) prophesy of Jesus Himself, and we often see this connection in the New Testament.

Simeon had revelation that the Messiah would be born on the feast of Trumpets and that His name would be Yeshua, so he waited in the temple on the fortieth day after Trumpets, when he knew that he was to be presented to God according to the law. It had been revealed that he would live to see the Messiah, and so when Joseph and Mary came and identified the name of the son as Yeshua (Jesus), Simeon rejoiced, took the baby in his arms, blessed God, and said in [Luke 2:29, 30](#),

²⁹ Now, Lord, Thou dost let Thy bond-servant depart in peace, according to Thy word; ³⁰ for my eyes have seen Thy Salvation [Yeshua].

On another occasion, Jesus told the Samaritan woman at the well in [John 4:22](#), “*Salvation is from the Jews.*” In other words, Yeshua-Jesus was to come from Judea, or the tribe of Judah, not from Samaria.

How to Overcome the Accuser

[Rev. 12:7](#) indicates that Michael cast the serpent-devil out of heaven to the earth, but [Rev. 12:11](#) says that “*they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb.*” In this case, “they” refers to “our brethren,” that is, those who had been accused day and night. This process of overcoming has been timeless, because before the cross men applied the blood of lambs to their sin, and this showed faith in the true Lamb that was yet to come. After the cross, the blood of animals ceased to have merit in the divine court, and any further use of or dependence upon animal blood could only express one’s lack of faith in the true Lamb of God.

The brethren overcame also by “*the word of their testimony.*” The Greek word for “testimony” is *marturia*, which means “witness, testimony,” and it also implies that many were to die as “martyrs” on account of this testimony in the courts of men. So it is not only the blood of Christ as the Lamb of God that allows the brethren to overcome, but also their own witness that was often sealed by their own blood as part of the body of Christ.

For this reason, the Greek word for “lamb” used here is *arnion*, “little lamb,” or, as the Concordant Version reads, “lambkin.” This refers to the overcomers themselves, for when [John 1:29](#) speaks of “the *Lamb* of God who takes away the sin of the world,” he uses the Greek word *amnos* to describe the full-grown Lamb—Jesus Christ. But at the end of John’s gospel, Jesus told Peter, “Tend My lambs,” using the word *arnion*. Jesus is the *amnos*; the body of Christ is the *arnion*.

John himself shows in his gospel that he understood the difference between the *amnos* and the *arnion*. The book of Revelation never uses the term *amnos*. It is always *arnion*, the little lambs. Hence, “the unveiling of Jesus Christ,” which is the title of the book itself, is about how Christ the *amnos* is being unveiled in the brethren, the *arnion*.

So also we see Michael casting the accuser out of the divine court, but after this, the brethren must also overcome the dragon on the earth. It is a two-step program, one for the Head and the other for the body of Christ. The first part was accomplished by Jesus’ death, resurrection, and ascension, which is prophesied in [Rev. 12:1–10](#). The second part has taken place over many generations, as each of the “brethren” individually overcome by their testimony and even by their own blood if necessary.

Chapter 20: The Persecution on Earth

The divine court has always included a prosecutor and a defense attorney. The prosecutor is known as the devil—that is, the Accuser. The Greek word for devil is *diabolos*, from *dia* (“through the operation of”) and *ballo*, “to throw repeatedly,” such as a rock. It is a picture of a rock being thrown repeatedly in order to cause a breach. In a court of law, the devil is the one who is called to bring up all of our faults and past sins continuously in order to drive a wedge between us and God and to paralyze us with uncertainty, guilt, and fear.

When the accuser was cast out of the divine court, Satan essentially lost his God-given mandate (and license) as the Prosecutor of the brethren. This was done through the blood of Jesus. In legal terms, when the full debt for sin has been paid, the law closes the books on the case, because the law has no further interest in the case. In other words, we are “*not under the law but under grace*,” as Paul says in [Rom. 6:15](#). This does not give us a license to sin ([Rom. 6:1, 2](#)), but it releases us from the debt or liability due to our sin.

This is how the devil was fired as the prosecutor. It was for lack of work to do. Paul tells us in [Rom. 8:1](#),

¹ There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

However, men do not always understand that their debt has been cancelled. They remain enslaved in their minds, thinking that God still holds their past sins against them. Though God forgives them, they do not forgive themselves. And so they continue to make payments on the cancelled debt as if they were still debtors to the law. For unbelievers, this is understandable, but Christians are often ignorant of this, although it is one of the main tenets of Christian faith.

This lack of faith in Christians and non-Christians alike is how the devil is able to continue working on earth, long after his position as the divine prosecutor was eliminated in heaven.

The New Creation Man Serves the Law of God

Romans 8 shows how the problem has persisted in spite of Christ’s work on the cross. Those who walk in the flesh, who set their minds on fleshly things, remain “*hostile toward God*” ([Rom. 8:7](#)) as long as they fail to walk after the spirit. Paul explains the difference between the fleshly mind and spiritual mind in the previous chapter, telling us in [Rom. 7:25](#), “*I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.*”

Paul shows that we can identify ourselves either as the old man of flesh (received from our natural descent from Adam, from Israel, or from our parents) or we may identify with the new creation man that was *spiritually* begotten. Each has a mind of its own. The old man desires to violate the law of God (i.e., to sin), for it functions by the law of sin and death. Paul identified with the new man, saying in [Rom. 7:22](#), “*I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man.*”

As long as men on earth are identified with the old man, dependent upon fleshly descent and genealogy, they walk in sin and death. So Paul says in [Rom. 8:6–9](#),

⁶ For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, ⁷ because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, ⁸ and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. ⁹ However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.

Many have tried to understand this chapter without being subject to the law of God. They cast aside the law and think they are spiritual for doing so. But in fact, as Paul says clearly, it is the spiritual man that is subject to the law, and it is the fleshly man that is incapable of subjecting himself to the law. Because “*sin is lawlessness*” ([1 John 3:4](#)), to walk in the flesh is to walk in a lawless (sinful) mindset that results in death.

Those with a lawless mindset often try to keep their fleshly man from sinning. The attempt to subject the flesh man to the law of God is futile in the end, even if we may discipline that man for a lifetime. Rather than reform the flesh man, he must simply be put to death, and we must be begotten from above to become new creatures.

The overcomers are those who by faith are begotten by the seed of the gospel of Christ. Even though they still have trouble keeping the old man in the grave (as Paul shows in [Rom. 7:15–24](#)), we may all identify ourselves in the divine court as the new creation man. During our life time, this remains a legal act that gives us legal standing in the divine court. Too often we slide back into the lawless mindset of the old man. But in the end the old man will die permanently, once we are “*changed in the atoms in the twinkling of an eye at the last trumpet*” ([1 Cor. 15:51](#), [52](#)).

Therefore, even though the accuser no longer has grounds to accuse us, this does not mean we are beyond his reach in practical terms. Multitudes of true believers were killed by various manifestations of the dragon over the centuries, in spite of Christ’s victory on the cross and in His resurrection. But the ability of the dragon to kill the body in no way gives him victory. The only entity that the dragon can kill is the old man of flesh. He cannot touch the new man.

So his tactic is to cause us to re-identify ourselves with the old man of flesh and renounce our identity with the new creation man. This was often done by attempting to force Christians to sacrifice to Caesar and to the pagan gods—an act of lawlessness, signifying the worship of false gods and serving mere men pretending to be gods.

Likewise, on a more personal and daily level, we are all in danger of setting up idols of the heart, which call us to give them a part of our lives and our time. This is the area of temptation that all have had to face, whether they have experienced persecution by religious and civil governments or not.

The Interim Wilderness

It is in this interim that we remain in the wilderness somewhere between Egypt and the Promised Land. It is an in-between state, in which righteousness is imputed to us, God calling what is not as though it were ([Rom. 4:17](#)).

The accuser (dragon) can no longer accuse the brethren in the divine court, but in being cast down to the earth, he has opportunity to accuse and persecute the saints in earthly courts. The woman goes into the wilderness, which represents a place of testing and trial prior to entering the Promised Land. So it is in this wilderness that the accuser now comes to persecute the woman (church).

John tells us that in spite of the long persecution, the remnant will overcome the accuser (dragon).

[Revelation 12:12](#) says,

¹² For this reason, rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time. ¹³ And when the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male child.

We may view this on two levels. In the big picture, the woman is the collective body called the church, and her persecution and deliverance is manifested on a historic level at the end of the age. On an individual level, however, each person undergoes his or her own difficulties during the few years of one’s life. Full deliverance on a personal level cannot be achieved until the historic deliverance, so when individuals die, as Paul did, each receives his own reward posthumously ([2 Tim. 4:6–8](#)).

Jesus tells John in [Rev. 22:12](#), “*Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me.*”

We learn from [Heb. 11:39](#), [40](#) that the prophets and martyrs of the past did not receive what was promised, because these rewards will be given out to the saints of every generation at the same time.

³⁹ And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised, ⁴⁰ because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

This principle is seen in the case of Caleb and Joshua, who, though they were overcomers having faith to enter the Promised Land, were forced to wait for the rest of that church in the wilderness. In spite of their faith, God did not allow them to receive the promise apart from the appointed time when the collective body all entered the land.

So also is it with us as individuals. Of course, those living at the end of the age will not have to wait past the grave to receive the promise, for “*we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed*” ([1 Cor. 15:51](#)). Those who “*are alive and remain shall be caught up with them [the risen ones] in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air*” ([1 Thess. 4:17](#)). These too follow the pattern of Caleb and Joshua, who were promised that they would be alive to enter the Promised Land ([Num. 14:30](#)).

Woe to the Earth and the Sea

[Rev. 12:12](#) says, “*Woe to the earth and the sea.*” This is, in fact, an introduction to the next chapter, where we see the rise of two beasts: one from the earth, and the other from the sea. The earth and sea are subjected to the dragon that is cast out of the divine court, and a new power thus arises, which is the final manifestation of beast governments prior to the Kingdom.

The verse implies that the beast rising from the sea ([Rev. 13:1](#)) and the other from the earth ([Rev. 13:11](#)) are both inspired and ruled by the dragon. In fact, as we will see from [Rev. 13:2](#), the beast from the sea is given power and authority by this dragon. Likewise, in [Rev. 13:11](#) the beast from the earth “*spoke as a dragon.*”

In the big picture, then, these two beasts arise as a result of the dragon being cast down to the earth when Christ ascended to the throne in heaven. Their power is drawn from men’s lack of faith to believe that Jesus Christ paid the penalty for their own sin and for the sin of the whole world.

As we will see, the beast from the sea is the Roman church, that is, the “Holy See.” The beast from the earth is a banking beast that arose at the time that the sea-beast received a fatal wound that was healed (1798–1804). The “Holy See” kept people in bondage to sin, not telling them that their debt was paid. They found Christian guilt to be useful, for then the church could continue to collect penance from the people and to pay for their relatives to be released from Purgatory.

In other words, the church failed to teach the truth about grace, for they redefined grace as God’s help to keep the old flesh man from sinning. Thus, “grace” was needed continually, because the old man of flesh can never be perfected. But in fact, biblical grace is *a state where the law is satisfied and requires no further payment on past debt.*

Some day the truth will be known to all, and the dragon will be fully overcome here on earth as it is in heaven.

Chapter 21: In the Wilderness

[Revelation 12:13, 14](#) says,

¹³ And when the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male child. ¹⁴ And the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, in order that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she was nourished for a time and times and half a time.

I have already mentioned previously that the 3½ “times” in the wilderness differs from Israel’s 40-year wilderness sojourn under Moses. But the 3½ times does not date from the day of Pentecost in Acts 2, but from Justinian’s decree. The basic pattern for the church is actually quite similar to that of the church in the wilderness under Moses. Israel’s 40-year wilderness experience was based on the principle of a year for a day ([Num. 14:34](#)); the last pattern is a Jubilee cycle for a year. Forty Jubilees is 1,960 years, dating from 33 to 1993 A.D., which ended the Age of the Church under Pentecost and began the transition into the Tabernacles Age.

But [Rev. 12:14](#) tells us that the woman’s wilderness sojourn was “*for a time and times and half a time*,” using Daniel’s terminology in [Dan. 7:25](#). This is 3½ “times,” or half of the seven times of divine judgment specified in [Lev. 26:18, 21, 24](#), etc. for their refusal to be obedient to the law of God in fulfillment of their vow (covenant).

Why is there a difference? First of all, the original forty-year judgment for Israel under Moses was an extension of the law found in [Deut. 25:3](#), where the maximum punishment for misdemeanors was *forty lashes*. The “seven times” judgment was for greater sin—in this case, Israel’s persistent refusal to be obedient.

We should view Israel’s 40 years in the wilderness as a time in which God gave Israel 40 lashes. The same is true with the church in the Pentecostal Age, where they were to wander for 40 Jubilees (1,960 years). This time period coincided largely with the 1,260 years, and both were part of the “seven times” of captivity. All of these cycles are valid and important in understanding the complete picture.

God’s Temple Building Project

The seven times (i.e., 7 x 360 years) is not divisible by 40, but by 210, which is the “*time of Jacob’s distress*” ([Jer. 30:7](#)). The number 210 is based on 21, which is the number of “distress.” Jacob experienced two such times. The first was when he worked for Laban who oppressed him for most of his 20 years. Jacob’s 21st year (when he returned to Canaan) was a Sabbath year, so it is reckoned as part of this cycle, much like any vacation/holiday year. The second 21-year cycle was when he was separated from Joseph, the birthright holder.

However, 210 is also a factor in dedicating the altar (by extension, the tabernacle itself) in [Num. 7:13, 14](#). There we find that each of the 12 tribes contributed one silver dish weighing 130 shekels, one silver bowl weighing 70 shekels, and one golden spoon weighing 10 shekels. The weight of each tribal gift was 210 shekels. Twelve such gifts weighed 2,520 shekels, which is “seven times.”

We see from this that the “seven times” of divine judgment upon Israel had a positive side to it. God used the time in a legal way to inflict judgment, but also He used it to rebuild, for on the prophetic level it was a lengthy “dedication” ceremony. Seeing the positive side of this 2,520 year cycle, we may view Israel’s judgment in a positive light, for *God is building a temple even while inflicting judgment*, or “distress.”

Israel began to be deported by the Assyrians in 745 B.C., and 2,520 years later was the year 1776 A.D., when they began to be regathered in the New World with the motto: *e pluribus unum*, “out of many, one.” Israel’s capital, Samaria, was destroyed in 721 B.C., and 2,520 years later the United States capital, Washington D.C., was built, and the new government moved to that location from Philadelphia.

This took place in 1800 A.D. during the transition from the beast of the sea to the beast of the earth in Revelation 13, as we will see later. This also took place in the early years of the Philadelphia church era (1776–1914).

The establishment of the United States in 1776 and the building of the new nation's capital in 1800 were 2520-year endpoints dating from the captivity of Israel and the fall of Samaria. The same cycle applies also to the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem. Israel was taken to Assyria, never again to return. Judah was taken to Babylon for just seventy years ([Jer. 25:11](#)).

Israel's captivity was set at 7 x 360 years; Judah's captivity was set at 7 x 10 years. Both captivities were thus "seven times," but the "time" was different in each case.

Judah's captivity came after the fall of Assyria, when Babylon established itself as an empire in 607 B.C. and then took Jerusalem in 604 B.C. These dates were starting points for other 2,520-year cycles that ended in 1914–1917 at the end of the Philadelphia church era and the start of the Laodicean. So Philadelphia's time essentially was the interim between the endpoints for Israel and for Judah. This is also why, I believe, the city of Philadelphia—named after the biblical city—was a key city in the prophetic history of the United States.

I have also shown in many other places that the endpoints of 1914–1917 were extended for a century on legal grounds, because the third beast (the Greek beast under Antiochus Epiphanes) had been deprived of a full century to rule Judah and Jerusalem from 163–63 B.C. Since God had contracted these "beasts" to judge and scourge Judah for seven times, this time had to be added to 1914–1917 in order to fulfill the legal contract. This brings us to 2014–2017, when the contract fully expires.

The 1,260 Years

[Dan. 7:25](#) tells us that the time of the little horn is the extension of the iron beast of Rome, and that his time of dominion is "*a time, times, and half a time*." In other words, this little horn is given the final half of the full seven times. This is an enormous amount of time, because the other half had to be divided among each of the other beasts.

John's statement in [Rev. 12:14](#) that the woman was sent into the wilderness for "*a time, times, and half a time*" links her wilderness experience (where she is persecuted) with the time of the little horn who persecutes her.

Throughout many past generations, Christians have been part of the woman in the wilderness, whether they understood this or not. They have prayed for deliverance during hard times without a clear understanding of the reasons for divine judgment. In fact, most have attributed their troubles to the work of the dragon, rather than to the judgments of God. To understand the cause of these troubles, one must go back to Scripture and see how the sins of our fathers brought judgment upon their children for many generations.

Scripture reveals the solution to the problem—repentance and obedience. Better yet, Scripture gives hope that all divine judgments come to an end, for judgment is directly proportional to the crime (sin). The value of understanding prophecy is that it gives answers to the length of time allotted to all divine judgment. We need only to obtain an understanding of the laws of time to know where we fit into the big picture and when these judgements must end.

Redeeming the Wilderness Time

When [Rev. 12:6](#) speaks of the "wilderness," John uses the Greek word *eramos*, which means "a solitary, lonely, desolate, deserted, uninhabited place." As usual, although John uses Greek to express his revelation, he is thinking with the Hebrew mindset, so we must go back to the Hebrew word for wilderness, which is *midbar*. The Hebrew word describes a place not nearly as bleak as the Greek word, for it includes pastures and does not include a desert.

So the wilderness wherein the woman flees is not a Sahara-like setting of barren sand dunes blowing in the wind. It is a pasture where she can be fed, or "nourished" ([Rev. 12:14](#)). The main overlap between the Hebrew and Greek concept is that it is a place where she can be alone while she grows and gains strength.

The Hebrew word *midbar* is used in [1 Sam. 23:14](#),

¹⁴ And David stayed in the wilderness [*midbar*] in the strongholds, and remained in the hill country in the wilderness [*midbar*] of Ziph. And Saul sought him every day, but God did not deliver him into his hand.

In the Greek translation (Septuagint), *midbar* is translated *eramos*, showing that *eramos* is the Greek way of expressing the Hebrew concept of *midbar*. Why is this important? *Midbar* is a noun that is derived from the root word *dabar* (the verb form). According to Hebrew expositors, the word *dabar* means “to speak,” but it implies “a driving of the Word” into new and unexplored territory. So we read in [Matt. 4:1](#),

¹ Then Jesus was led up [*anago*, “to set sail, launch, drive”] by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

The wilderness itself is the place where one is driven by the word and by the Spirit in order to receive nourishment from the word or revelation of God. David experienced this while he was being persecuted by Saul. The woman likewise is persecuted by the Saul Church and flees into the wilderness not only for protection, but to receive a divine revelation of truth.

Hence, the wilderness is not wasted time, nor is it a mere dungeon or cage where nothing is accomplished. The wilderness is a place of spiritual growth and experience in learning how to hear His voice in order to receive the revelation of the word. The woman in Revelation 12 is persecuted by the dragon in the heavenly signs, but on earth, the practical reality is that the Roman church persecuted those who claimed Sarah as their spiritual mother. This is a direct parallel to Saul persecuting David, for Saul was crowned on Pentecost and is a type of the corrupted church in rebellion against God.

Nonetheless, God uses this wilderness time to bring the revelation of the word as He builds His new temple, and this principle applies to every individual who has ever been led into the wilderness for further training. This was also the topic of my book, [The Purpose of the Wilderness](#).

Chapter 22: Two Wings of a Great Eagle

In [Rev. 12:14](#) we read that “*two wings of a great eagle were given to the woman*” so that she could fly into the wilderness for her protection. This is a rather obvious reference to the time when Israel was brought into the wilderness under Moses, for we read in [Exodus 19:4](#),

⁴ You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to Myself.

The next verses then give us the purpose of God’s act,

⁵ Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; ⁶ and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation ...

If the eagles’ wings were given to Israel in order to bring them to Mount Sinai where they were to be married to God under the Old Covenant, then the purpose is similar with the New Covenant woman in the wilderness. The main difference is that the second woman is brought to *Mount Sion* ([Heb. 12:22, KJV](#)) to be married to God under the New Covenant. In this sense, the wings signified protection and provision, picturing God escorting her to the wedding.

Wings of Covering and Training

Scripture uses wings as a symbol of covering, which includes protection, as in [Matt. 23:37](#), and healing ([Mal. 4:2](#)). But in [Deut. 32:10–13](#) the Song of Moses reads in part,

¹⁰ He found him [Israel] in a desert land, and in the howling waste of a wilderness; He encircled him, He cared for him, He guarded him as the pupil of his eye. ¹¹ Like an eagle that stirs up its nest, that hovers over its young, He spread His wings and caught them. He carried them on His pinions. ¹² The Lord alone guided him, and there was no foreign god with him. ¹³ He made him ride on the high places of the earth ...

Men had observed from ancient times how an eagle would stir up its nest in order to push its young out, forcing them to learn to fly. They observed how the mother eagle would then spread its wings and catch them as the eaglet fell. The eagle would then carry its young back to the nest, where this training exercise could begin again. All of this was necessary in teaching the eaglets to fly.

So also did God bring Israel out of Egypt in order to teach them to fly. Egypt is thus pictured as Israel’s “nest,” the place where the nation was born. God, as the “great eagle,” did not merely convey them on His wings to Sinai, but pushed them out of the nest by means of the ten plagues, which caused Pharaoh to expel them from the land ([Exodus 12:33](#)).

The eagle metaphor, then, is not only about protection, but also about *teaching and training*. The same can be said of the woman in the wilderness. The church was born in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, but soon God stirred up the nest and she was pushed out of the old land by persecution ([Acts 8:1](#)). Jerusalem fulfilled the role of Egypt in this case, because (as Paul tells us in [Gal. 4:25](#)) Jerusalem is Hagar, *the Egyptian*.

The eagle trains her young to fly, and in their struggle to learn to coordinate their wings, they also gain strength to fly. So [Isaiah 40:29–31](#) says,

²⁹ He gives strength to the weary, and to him who lacks might He increases power. ³⁰ Though youths grow weary and tired, and vigorous young men stumble badly, ³¹ yet those who wait for the Lord will gain new strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary.

Here the weary are pictured as young eaglets who lack strength in their wings. If they “*wait for the Lord*,” they are caught by God (the mother eagle) and “mount up” before they fall to the ground. In this way they gain strength and learn to fly.

Gaining Strength through Faith and Love

So when John pictures the woman in the wilderness being given two wings of a great eagle in order to fly in the wilderness, we understand this to picture the training of the church, or at least those who are overcomers. Even as there are young eagles who do not survive the training, so also are there Christians who never learn to fly. To fly is to overcome, and Jesus makes it clear in His message to the seven churches that not all believers are overcomers.

The strength and coordination of an overcomer’s “wings” is perhaps measured by faith and love. No eaglet wants to be pushed out of the nest and put into a position of danger, but yet this is the only way to teach it how to trust its mother for protection and help. As believers experience such situations, they learn faith which includes trust. It is as if the mother eagle says, “Trust me, I know what I am doing.” True faith is the ability to rest in the midst of trouble, overcoming fear and all of its negative reactions to such alarming situations.

Therefore, during the woman’s time in the wilderness, God intended to train the church and not merely protect her and feed her. There are levels of faith to attain, for the apostles asked Jesus in [Luke 17:5](#), “*increase our faith*.” Paul says in [Rom. 1:17](#) that the gospel reveals how we are to grow “*from faith to faith*.” Faith comes by hearing ([Rom. 10:17](#)), so the more we hear and obey (respond), the more our faith is increased, and the greater is our level of spiritual strength and maturity.

Likewise, one’s ability to love is the second great measure of maturity, as I explain in [chapter 3](#) of my book, [How to be an Overcomer](#). There are three basic levels of love, each having its own Greek word to describe it. As we grow in strength, the underlying purpose of such training is to pass on the character of God to His children. The ultimate purpose of persecution is to teach us how to love our enemies, even as God loved us while we were yet His enemies ([Rom. 5:10](#)). It is this kind of love that distinguishes overcomers from believers and also from all other religions who lay claim to teachings about love.

The Earth Helps the Woman

The woman’s time in the wilderness is specifically given as “*a time and times and half a time*,” which, as we have already shown, is a period of 1,260 years. In this case the time begins with the rise of the little horn from 529–534 A.D. and comes to a climax at the French Revolution from 1789–1794.

The French Revolution was planned by a group of disaffected Jesuits who were angry with the Roman Church—and Pope Clement XIV in particular—for disbanding the Jesuit Order in 1773. The 23,000 disbanded Jesuits had to find other organizations to join, but one in particular, Adam Weishaupt, who had been a professor of canon law in Ingolstadt University, founded a secret society on May 1, 1776 which he called The Illuminati.

The Illuminati recognized that they were parasites in need of a host organization to infiltrate and take over in order to gain unsuspecting followers to support them. They chose to infiltrate the Freemasons, which was accomplished by 1782. From this vantage point they planned and carried out the French Revolution, by which they wreaked havoc upon the Roman church, killed about 30,000 of its priests, and established the first secular republic. Because France had been known as the “firstborn son of the church,” this was a severe blow to the Roman church.

The Illuminati ex-Jesuits were allied to certain Jewish bankers who financed them. These Jews were only too happy to weaken the Roman church, for they considered Rome to be their most powerful arch-enemy. Out of the French Revolution came Napoleon, the “neo-Apollyon,” as he called himself, who marched on Rome and took the pope captive in 1798.

This became the “fatal wound” inflicted upon the beast from the sea in [Rev. 13:3](#), and once this wound was healed in 1804, the alliance between the Illuminati (ex-Jesuits) and the Jewish bankers and financiers was expanded to include the Roman church in general. All of these developments in Revelation 13 find their roots a few verses earlier in [Rev. 12:15, 16](#).

¹⁵ And the serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, so that he might cause her to be swept away with the flood. ¹⁶ And the earth helped the woman, and the earth drank up the river which the dragon poured out of his mouth.

The water and earth in these verses are “inspired” by the two beasts in Revelation 13, the first one rising from the sea (or water), and the other rising from the earth.

In the broader context, these two beasts are part of the “little horn” in Daniel 7, though Daniel saw nothing of this second beast.

The water (flood) pouring forth from the mouth of the dragon was meant to sweep the woman away—that is, to destroy the true Church that brings forth Christ and His body of overcomers. This describes all the persecution in general, but specifically the Inquisitions and the Counter-reformation movement in which Rome attempted to stamp out all opposing views that challenged its own. But when the new beast arose from the (secular) *earth* through the Illuminati Jesuits and their Jewish allies, they actually helped the woman as well. With Rome’s power greatly diminished, the Protestant churches gained strength.

The flood of water is pictured as coming out of the serpent’s mouth. First, this identifies the Roman pope with the serpent or dragon which had attempted to devour the body of Christ. Secondly, because the flood came out of his mouth, we understand that this “flood” took the form of papal decrees to exterminate all opposition.

Those decrees, however, were largely ineffectual as the result of the earth’s help. The Jewish-Freemasonic alliance, led by angry ex-Jesuits, worked to create secular republics, which negated the papal decrees and diverted much of Rome’s wrath from the Protestants to the new threat. This is pictured as the earth opening its mouth to drink the river of papal wrath.

The chapter then ends with [Rev. 12:17](#),

¹⁷ And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

Being thus thwarted in his immediate goal, the dragon is seen retreating in order to plot further “*war with the rest of her offspring*.” Hence, the war does not end with the French Revolution, nor even with the “fatal wound” of the religious beast. In fact, as we will see shortly, the fatal wound is healed, and the “*war with the saints*” ([Dan. 7:21](#)) enters a new phase in history. Though Daniel did not see the details of this new phase, John certainly did and was able to add to the revelation.

One thing is clear. When the earth helped the woman, the dragon suffered a major defeat. Our study of Revelation 13 will show that the beast from the sea (Roman Church) was forced into an alliance with the beast from the earth (Jewish bankers and Freemasonry). Although the new beast from the earth caused men to continue worshiping the beast from the sea, the earth beast controlled the sea beast’s financial affairs from that point on. Hence, the earth beast was a financial beast that rose to power during the past 200 years.

This is, no doubt, the final phase of the “*war with the saints*,” as far as John could see. In my view, even as the little horn itself represented an extension of the Roman (iron) beast, so also is this sea-earth alliance *an extension of the little horn*. I believe it was meant to last about 200 years. The so-called “Holy Alliance” that was signed on Sept. 26, 1815 gave the appearance of a political document, but in reality it was an alliance between politics and religion, as *The Catholic Encyclopedia* confirms.

The Emperor Francis I of Austria, King Frederick William III of Prussia, and the Tsar Alexander I of Russia, signed a treaty on 26 September, 1815, by which they united in a "Holy Alliance." Although a political act, the treaty in its wording is a statement purely religious in character

The world had long learned not to expect from statesmen official documents in which so religious a tone prevailed. When the wording of the agreement became known early in 1816, men saw in the alliance the consequence of the closest union of politics and religion

During the years 1814–15, a number of treaties were concluded between the various countries of Europe. In this series of compacts the Holy Alliance forms merely one link and in a practical sense the most unimportant one; it was also the only treaty which was religious in character. All these treaties have, however, one trait in common. They revive the conception of a centralized Europe, in which the rights of the individual states seem to be limited by the duties which each state has in regard to the whole body of states.

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07398a.htm>

Biblically speaking, this was an alliance between the sea beast (religion) and the earth beast (secular/political). This treaty was the earliest beginning of the *European Union*. Others had tried and failed to unify Europe by means of war. The Holy Alliance was an attempt to unify Europe by treaty. The problem is that this unity was still based upon the dragon's strategies, not upon the laws of Christ.

Perhaps the end of this final phase of the little horn will end with the collapse of the EU, whose modern form is actually based on the more recent Treaty of Rome that was signed in 1957.

Who Stood on the Seashore?

Revelation 12 ends with the dragon/serpent being enraged that the earth would actually help the woman and protect her from the dragon's persecution. Hence, the beast from the earth is helpful, even though it is not a "good" beast as such. In fact, as we will see, the earth beast supports the sea beast's claim to be worthy of worship (13:12).

When Stephen Langdon divided the New Testament into chapters and verses seven centuries ago, he mistakenly put the last sentence of chapter 12 as part of Revelation 13. Cardinal Langdon, a prolific writer of Bible commentaries, was the Archbishop of Canterbury for the Roman church from 1207–1228 A.D. The present structure of chapters and verses in our Bibles we owe to Langdon. It was a helpful idea, but his divisions were not always correct.

The full thought in [Rev. 12:17](#) reads in Panin's *Numeric English New Testament*,

¹⁷ And the dragon waxed wroth with the woman, and went away to make war with the rest of her seed, that keep the commandments of God and hold the testimony of Jesus. And he [i.e., the dragon] stood upon the sand of the sea.

It was not John who stood on the shore, but the dragon. The dragon's purpose was to conjure up a beast from the sea after being defeated by Michael, the Archangel, and cast down to the earth. The text here gives us the sequence of events, but does not specify timing. When the "male child" was caught up to the throne in heaven ([Rev. 12:5](#)), the dragon had no further power to endanger that son's life, so he found alternate targets among "*the rest of her offspring.*"

Here we see a specific reference to the fact that true believers are the younger brothers of Jesus Christ. They are the rest of the woman's children—Jesus' younger brothers. These are the children of a common spiritual mother, whom Paul pictures allegorically as Sarah, the New Covenant and the New Jerusalem. [Gal. 4:26](#) says, "*But the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother.*"

Hence, we are shown that the dragon's wrath is really directed at Jesus Christ, but because He was beyond reach after His ascension, the dragon then persecuted His spiritual brothers. No doubt when John received this revelation, he remembered Jesus' words recorded earlier in [John 15:20](#),

²⁰ Remember the word that I said to you, "A slave is not greater than his master." If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also.

In view of this persecution on account of the testimony of Christ, John then describes this "*war with the saints*" (as [Dan. 7:21](#) puts it). Revelation 13 runs parallel to Daniel 7.

A study of Revelation 13–15.

Chapter 1: The Beast from the Sea

We have shown how the last few verses of Revelation 12 introduce chapter 13. The water coming from the serpent's mouth in [Rev. 12:15](#) is directly connected to the "sea" that gives birth to the first beast. The earth helping the woman in [Rev. 12:16](#) gives birth to the second beast that rises from the earth in [Rev. 13:11](#).

The War

Revelation 13 records John's vision of Daniel's little horn, the extension of the iron beast. John, of course, knew everything that Daniel had written on this topic, but he also received further revelation which Daniel apparently did not see. [Rev. 13:1](#) says,

¹ ... And I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems, and on his heads were blasphemous names. ² And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like those of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority.

Whereas Daniel saw four distinct beasts ([Daniel 7:3](#)), John saw just one hybrid beast composed of characteristics of all four that Daniel saw. Daniel's beasts were portrayed as a lion, bear, leopard, and a nameless iron-toothed beast. John, on the other hand, sees a single beast with the mouth of a lion, the feet of a bear, and resembling a leopard.

It is apparent that Daniel saw a succession of empires, each in turn opposing God's Kingdom. But John sees all of these beast empires as a single, continuous, dragon-inspired empire. Both are correct, of course, but from different viewpoints.

In Daniel's breakdown of the four beasts, he sees also a fifth that is like an extension of the fourth beast in the progression of history. These four or five beasts are:

1. Babylon (607–537 B.C.)
2. Medo-Persia (537–330 B.C.)
3. Greece (332–63 B.C.)
4. Rome (63 B.C.-476 A.D.)
5. Rome extended (Papacy)

Daniel speaks of this fifth beast, calling it a "little horn." (A "horn" is power or authority in its symbolism. The horn of an animal was seen as its primary weapon by which it dominated others by force.) [Dan. 7:8](#) describes this "little horn" in this way:

⁸ ... this horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth uttering great boasts.

In the angelic explanation that Daniel was given of this little horn, we read in [Dan. 7:21, 22](#),

²¹ I kept looking, and that horn was waging war with the saints and overpowering them ²² until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was passed in favor of the saints of the Highest One, and the time arrived when the saints took possession of the kingdom.

John sees the beast coming from the sea primarily as the manifestation of Daniel's "little horn," the fifth manifestation of power in the earth. [Dan. 7:7, 8](#) makes it clear that this "horn" comes from the fourth beast with iron teeth (Rome). That is our first major clue as to its interpretation. This "horn" assumes power as a successor to the Roman Empire. It is, in fact, Papal Rome.

The next major clue is the fact that this little horn persecutes the saints of the Most High God until the time that the saints receive the kingdom. That is the time of the manifestation of the sons of God—an event that we have yet to see. And so we know that this little horn was given a rather lengthy time of boasting. [Dan. 7:25](#) gives it "*a time and times and half a time*." John says essentially the same thing, but tells us specifically what this means in [Rev. 13:5](#),

⁵ And there was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies; and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him.

Here John interprets Daniel's rather vague statement of timing. Even John's statement must be understood from a prophetic standpoint. A "time" is twelve months in John's revelation, and 3½ times is then 42 months. We must then take this to the next level, seeing the common Scriptural principle where *a day prophesies of a year* (as in [Num. 14:34](#) and in [Ezekiel 4:5, 6](#)). It is 1,260 "days," that is, 1,260 YEARS.

But before continuing, we must go back to [Rev. 13:3, 4](#), which we skipped earlier.

³ And I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed. And the whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast; ⁴ and they worshiped the dragon, because he gave his authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?"

Here John gives us a quick look ahead to the end of the 42 months (1,260 years), when the beast from sea received its deadly wound in 1798 that was healed in 1804. After this quick look to the future, John then continues in verses 6 and 7 to tell us of the blasphemous words of the beast during his entire tenure, along with its war against the saints.

Arrogant Blasphemy

Blasphemy is understood differently by different groups. In Scripture, the temple priests condemned Jesus on a charge of blasphemy ([Matt. 26:65](#)). At the time, Saul (later Paul) would have agreed with them, if he had been present. However, later, after his conversion, Paul lamented in [1 Tim. 1:13](#), "*I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor*." Paul came to understand that persecuting the church was blasphemy, although he had done so with full authorization from the temple.

There is no doubt, then, that both sides would accuse the other of blasphemy. So when we read in [Rev. 13:5](#) that the beast from the sea spoke "*arrogant words and blasphemies*," one should not expect the Roman church to admit that its persecution of the overcomers was actually blasphemy. To them, the overcomers were just heretics guilty of causing schism in the church. From Rome's perspective, these "heretics" were the blasphemers that were worthy of death.

Yet Paul makes it clear that persecution itself is defined as blasphemy, because it attributes to God a nature and character that does not truly reflect His heart. Church leaders tortured and killed "heretics" as if such behavior was approved by God. They did not understand the mind of God at all.

To rule on a throne in place of Christ in itself is not a sin. King David did it. He ruled Israel on the throne of God. However, he did so in obedience to God, never thinking of himself as being above God or His law. He ruled with the heart and mind of Jesus Christ (or at least made every attempt to do this). David did not attempt to overrule the divine law, but ruled in subjection to the law. David recognized that it was not his right to make new laws, but only to rule by God's laws.

David was thus a true “vicar of Christ.” Saul, on the other hand, usurped authority by claiming the throne as his own, rather than ruling as a steward.

The problem comes when men claim to be vicars, but then think that God has empowered them to overstep their bounds. The Pope thus staged a revolt against Jesus Christ by assuming the divine right to rule as he pleased on the grounds that God had given him the throne of the church and, indeed, of the world. This is what John meant when he said that this little horn had a mouth speaking arrogant blasphemies.

The claim to “apostolic succession from Peter” lost its validity the moment one of those successors began to issue decrees that did not reflect the mind of Christ. Daniel foresaw these things in [Dan. 7:8](#), quoted earlier, saying “*this horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth uttering great boasts.*” Those boasts, as John said later, were blasphemous in the eyes of God.

War Against the Saints

The beast from the sea in [Rev. 13:1–10](#) is the same beast that the earlier prophet saw in [Dan. 7:21, 22](#). In fact, this is the clearest link between Daniel and Revelation, showing that the book of Revelation is a continuation and clarification of Daniel's prophecy. Daniel says that the little horn would wage war against the saints until the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom.

One only needs to read [Foxy's Book of Martyrs](#) to begin to comprehend the scope of the Roman persecution in their attempt to retain power over the minds of all men. Millions were killed, tortured, burned at the stake, and were “*worn down*” as Daniel said. There is no need to look to a future “Antichrist” to do these things. They have already happened. The only reason men look to the future for the fulfillment of these things is because they have forgotten the past and no longer study plain history.

[Rev. 13:7, 8](#) speaks of the same little horn, saying,

⁷ And it was given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them; and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him. ⁸ And all who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.

The saints that Daniel and John picture are not those who submit to the Roman Pope, but rather those who submit to Jesus Christ. When the Pope usurped the place of Christ and took for himself the power to change the divine laws according to his own will, then men had the choice of following God and His laws or men and their creeds.

The same issue came up with the original Apostles in [Acts 4:19](#) when the chief priests of the temple—who had usurped the throne of Christ—commanded them to submit to their authority and stop teaching in Jesus' name. The priests claimed to sit in Moses' seat, even as the Popes claimed to sit in Peter's chair. Both became usurpers and put away the divine law by their own traditions. This disqualified both of them from ruling the Kingdom of God.

The French Revolution

[Rev. 13:5](#) gives the little horn authority for 42 months, which is the equivalent of 1,260 “days” (actually *years*). This time cycle, according to [Dan. 7:25](#), began with Justinian, who changed time and law from 529–534 A.D., when he changed Roman law to reflect church law. He did not realize the consequences of his actions until later when the Roman pope challenged him on a point of law. Only then did it become clear that the emperor had taken upon himself the role of a servant—the enforcer of church doctrines and papal decrees.

Power struggles between monarchs and popes continued throughout the centuries, as history shows. Yet in the end the papal power of excommunication was stronger than any monarch could resist or oppose. Hence, the time of the little horn began with the emperor in Constantinople, but it quickly shifted to the Roman pontiff.

Forty-two months speaks of the prophetic time period of 1,260 years until the French Revolution in 1789–1794. This revolution rocked Europe and the church itself, because France was a pillar of the Roman church. The popes called France “the firstborn of the church.”

Illuminism

But a new beast was rising that would put in check the power of the sea beast. It was a philosophical beast, formed by Adam Weishaupt on May 1, 1776, an ex-Jesuit who expressed bitter hatred toward the Roman church for disbanding the Jesuit Order in 1773. Yet he himself was a tool of his more secretive financiers. He founded what was called The Illuminati, although this term had been used by other secret societies for a long time. Weishaupt's Illuminism combined gnostic teaching with Jewish mysticism of the Cabala, along with some pretense of Christianity (which he despised) in order to use a wide range of people to support the organization financially. In one of his papers, he wrote:

“You cannot imagine what consideration and sensation our Priest's degree is arousing. The most wonderful thing is that great Protestant and reformed theologians who belong to Illuminism still believe that the religious teaching imparted in it contains the true and genuine spirit of the Christian religion. Oh! Men, of what cannot you be persuaded? I never thought that I should become the founder of a new religion” (Nesta Webster, Secret Societies and Subversive Movements, p. 218, 219).

Weishaupt used his Jesuit skills to infiltrate Freemasonry and to use it for his own purposes. After founding his Illuminati organization in 1776, Weishaupt was initiated into Freemasonry in 1777 in Munich. This began his rise within the ranks of Freemasonry. Later he wrote:

“We must consider how we can begin to work under another form. If only the aim is achieved, it does not matter under what cover it takes place, and a cover is always necessary. For in concealment lies a great part of our strength. For this reason we must always cover ourselves with the name of another society. The lodges that are under Freemasonry are in the meantime the most suitable cloak for our high purpose, because the world is already accustomed to expect nothing great from them which merits attention... A society concealed in this manner cannot be worked against. In case of a prosecution or of treason the superiors cannot be discovered We shall be shrouded in impenetrable darkness from spies and emissaries of other societies” (Webster, p. 219, 220).

In 1786 his organization was discovered when a messenger was struck and killed by lightning, and the authorities found incriminating papers sown into the lining of the dead man's coat. The Illuminati was then outlawed, but it had already been hidden in Freemasonry where it could function more freely.

The Magdalene Cult

Weishaupt was a Jesuit professor of canon law at Ingolstadt University until 1773, when the pope disbanded the Order. It is often argued that Weishaupt hated the Jesuits, along with the Roman church as a whole, but this would seem strange, coming from a professor of canon law. If he truly hated the church prior to the abolition of the Jesuit Order, then no doubt it was because Weishaupt was part of the main rival faction within the church itself.

This rival faction believed that Jesus had married Mary Magdalene, that He had survived the crucifixion, and that He had three children, who became the progenitors of the Merovingian monarchs in Europe. The Merovingians began with Merovech (415–456 A.D.), who was king of the Franks. Legend says that he was conceived while his mother was swimming in the ocean and was impregnated by a Quinotaur, a sea monster. This idea was later taken as evidence of descent from the Fish, which was an early church Christian symbol of Christ. (The Greek word for fish is *ichthus*, whose acronym is **I**esous **C**hristos **T**heous **U**ois, **S**oter.)

The theory of Merovingian descent from Jesus was later used by monarchs to claim greater authority than the pope, whose presumed authority was based on Peter. This theory was put forth in the 1982 book Holy Blood Holy Grail and later popularized by the movie, *The Da Vinci Code*.

It is likely that Weishaupt, as a Jesuit, was part of this alternate movement within the Roman church. When the Jesuits were suppressed, and he lost his position at the University, he then openly turned against the Roman church and seemingly even against the Jesuit Order itself. At any rate, Weishaupt's Illuminati was designed first to overthrow the Roman church, but when the papacy was reinstated, they were content to undermine the traditional teaching of the Roman church and replace its devotion to Mary the mother of Jesus with devotion to Mary Magdalene. They knew that if they could succeed in replacing one Mary with another, they would ultimately be able to lay claim to having both spiritual and political authority as direct descendants of Jesus Himself.

One might ask what their ultimate purpose was meant to accomplish. As with all such people, the goal was to obtain power and money, or, in this case, to use what money they already had to increase their power. To accomplish this, they needed to eliminate all opposition, and recognizing that the Roman church had the most power, they focused upon destroying the papacy. Once they accomplished this goal (in 1798–1800), then they were able to control and use the church, having infiltrated it as they did with Freemasonry earlier.

Evidence of this infiltration is now surfacing, especially with the book and movie by Dan Brown, *The DaVinci Code*. Catholic Gnostics are now secure enough to come out into the open, for they believe many are ready to hear their doctrine that Jesus married Mary Magdalene and had children with her, who are the ancestors of the European royal families (i.e., the Merovingians).

Ultimately, the goal is not really to get them to believe their doctrines, but to destroy all forms of Christianity itself. Their aim is to destroy the present society in order to rebuild it as a Luciferian Order. To do this, they must also destroy marriage and the family unit and promote all forms of immorality and avarice among the youth.

The Magdalene cult itself is only a way to gain support among Catholics to shift power from the sea beast to the earth beast. Once this has been accomplished, the earth beast plans to set forth its “final truth” that Lucifer, the supposed brother of Jesus, is the true inheritor of the earth. They hope in this way to shift Christianity to Luciferianism.

Because the church lost its moral compass a long time ago in the search for power and money (supposedly to establish the Kingdom of God), God has raised up the beast from the earth. In the 1700's, this beast destroyed the power of the church; in the 1800's it made an alliance with the church in order to use it for its own purposes, but today the entire social and moral order is being destroyed.

The Jesuit Order

The Jesuits, or Society of Jesus, was an organization founded in 1540 with a highly disciplined group of men who were taught to obey orders and not to question the morality or wisdom of those orders. Malachi Martin, himself a Jesuit, wrote favorably about them in his book, The Jesuits,

“And so was born what can be rightly called Jesuitism, the complete subjugation of all a man is, thinks, feels, and does to a practical ideal achievable in the world around him, in absolute obedience and submission to the mind and decisions of the Roman Pope, the Vicar of Christ.” (p. 162)

There were three grades in the Jesuit Order under the Father-General. They were the Lay Brothers, the Spiritual Coadjutors, and the Professed Fathers. The lower orders were often men of good character, who sincerely believed that to follow the Church was to follow Jesus Himself. But in order for a Jesuit to move up in rank, he had to be found “worthy,” that is, he had to prove that he was really under the mind-control of his masters in the upper grades.

Ultimately, there was only one sin—to disobey an order—for Malachi Martin himself writes,

“Every Superior was to be obeyed as the representative of Christ. Obeying this representative, you were obeying Christ; you were doing the will of Christ.” (p. 196)

“You do not merely do what you are told without showing any overt opposition. Nor do you merely choose to will as your Superior wills, to do willingly what he commands. Now you agree mentally with your superior, you have obedience of the intellect. Unconditionally, you think like your Superior ‘so far as only the surrendered will can sway the intellect.’ This highest form is what Ignatius calls ‘blind obedience ... the voluntary renunciation of private judgment.” (p. 197)

Further, he quotes Ignatius, the founder of the Order on page 197 saying, *“I must be as a dead man’s corpse without will or judgment.”*

This is the apex of the doctrine of submission to men. Malachi Martin treats this as a Christian virtue. But it is the ultimate doctrine pictured by King Saul, when the people rejected the rule of Christ and wanted to be ruled by men. There is no higher form of King Saul than what Martin shows us about the Jesuit Order. Moreover, such mind control is characteristic of a slave, and is therefore based on the Old Covenant, or Hagar, the slave woman ([Gal. 4:25](#)). Such Jesuits actively seek to subject themselves to such slavery, claiming this is a virtue.

The Jesuits Suppressed

The Jesuit Order (or Society of Jesus) was feared by all of the monarchs, for they enforced loyalty to the popes, and any time a king deviated from absolute devotion to the pope, the Jesuits would remind him of their power. If persuasion did not work, they possessed the knowledge of poisons. Ultimately, the kings of Europe began to expel the Jesuits from their countries, dumping them on the shores of Italy.

The rigid Jesuit discipline made them a powerful tool in the hand of the popes as they sought to retain power over the monarchs of Europe. One by one, the nations of Europe expelled the Jesuits in the 1700’s. Martin writes on page 215,

“Between 1759 and 1761 all Jesuits in Portugal and its overseas dominions were arrested, transported by royal navy ships, and deposited on the shores of the papal states in Italy. All Jesuit property—houses, churches, colleges—was confiscated.”

France was next to do this in 1762. In 1767 the same occurred in Spain and the Spanish dominions in America. Naples, Parma, and Austria followed suit. When the Cardinals met to elect a new pope in 1769, the Bourbon family made it clear they would accept a pope only if he agreed to disband his army—the Jesuit Order. The Roman Church did not want more states to break with Rome as England had done in 1534. So the agreement was made. The Church had lost a huge power struggle.

The new Pope reluctantly abolished the Jesuits on July 21, 1773. Nesta Webster writes,

“The truth is then, that, far from abetting the Illuminati, the Jesuits were their most formidable opponents, the only body of men sufficiently learned, astute, and well organized to outwit the schemes of Weishaupt. In suppressing the Jesuits it is possible that the Old Regime remove the only barrier capable of resisting the tide of revolution” (Secret Societies and Subversive Movements, p. 199).

Then the French Revolution from 1789–1794 overthrew the Roman Church in France, killed or exiled its monarchs, and established what they called a Republic. At the same time a Republican movement was gaining strength in Italy. When the republican agent, Hugo Bassville, was murdered in the streets of Rome in January 1793, the French government held the pope complicit in the murder. Alarmed, the pope joined a European coalition in 1795, sending 12,000 troops to fight against France and to bring it back under papal control.

In 1796 France sent Napoleon against Austria and Italy, easily defeating them. When Pope Pius VI refused to renounce political power, he took the aged pope captive and expelled the entire Roman curia. The pope later died in a French prison in Valence at the age of 82. As his health failed, Napoleon issued an order that no successor should be named. Even so, Napoleon allowed Pope Pius VII to be elected in Venice on March 14, 1800. His relationship with Napoleon was often stormy, and in fact, Napoleon imprisoned him as well from 1809–1813.

But by this time, Napoleon's days were numbered, for he was greatly weakened by his disastrous invasion of Russia in 1812. He was forced to abdicate in 1814. The nations of Europe then met at the Congress of Vienna to "redraw the map of Europe" in what came to be known as the Holy Alliance (1815).

The "fatal wound" inflicted upon the first beast after 1,260 years occurred generally with the two popes being taken captive. Perhaps more important, however, was the captivity of the first pope, as there was no pope at all for a short time. But yet the Church came back to life, and the second beast gave its authority to the first, as [Rev. 13:12](#) indicates.

Chapter 2: The Equal Justice of God

The section about the beast of the sea closes with [Rev. 13:10](#), saying,

¹⁰ If anyone is destined for captivity, to captivity he goes; if anyone kills with the sword, with the sword he must be killed. Here is the perseverance [or endurance] and the faith of the saints.

What does this have to do with the two beasts of Revelation 13? First of all, the beast from the sea persecutes the overcomers, known to Daniel as “*the saints of the Most High*.” Therefore, if these saints are killed by the sword, it is not on account of divine justice, but rather *injustice*. So this principle is to be applied to those unjustly killing the saints, and we *cannot* conclude that the saints were killed because they deserved it.

More to the point, however, this statement points to the Old Covenant mindset that was seen when Israel refused the sword of the Spirit offered to them first at Mount Horeb. By refusing to hear the word for themselves ([Exodus 20:18–21](#)), they were left with mere physical swords with which to conquer Canaan. By contrast, Jesus gave spiritual swords to His disciples and told them to conquer the world by these means.

So in the end, what Israel did to the Canaanites was done to Israel. Whatever Canaanites survived the genocide fled into other nations or were reduced to captivity. God judged the Canaanites for killing babies as part of their religious practice. Jerusalem later did the same ([Jer. 19:4](#), [5](#), [6](#)). And so God treated them by the same standard of measure, according to the law in [Lev. 19:33](#), [34](#), [35](#), [36](#), which Jesus confirmed also in [Matt. 7:2](#),

² For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you.

John then references this principle of equal weights and measures in [Rev. 13:10](#). Who are those “*destined to captivity*”? It is those who have cast off the law and authority of God and have usurped power as if the kingdom was *theirs*. Who are those who must be killed with the sword? It is those who have killed with the sword, having an Old Covenant mindset while yet in rebellion against the law of God.

Prior to Jesus’ crucifixion, Peter was still bound by an Old Covenant mindset. When the soldiers came to arrest Jesus, Peter wanted to defend Jesus with a sword, thinking (as any normal devoted follower would) that his actions were good and right. But Jesus rebuked Peter in [Matt. 26:52](#), [53](#), where we read,

⁵² Then Jesus said to him, “Put your sword back into its place; for all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword. ⁵³ Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels?”

Peter’s outlook was yet carnal, in spite of the fact that he had performed miracles of healing ([Luke 10:9](#)) and had cast out demons ([Luke 10:17](#)). The same Peter who confessed Jesus as the Christ in [Matt. 16:16](#) turned and became an adversary (“satan”) to Jesus a few verses later ([Matt. 16:23](#)).

The Roman church has chosen to honor Peter in the seat of its authority, the so-called “chair of Peter.” In placing the church under Peter’s authority, they inadvertently took upon themselves Peter’s problem with carnality as well. This is why it is so important to be under Jesus’ covering and not the covering of men. Men’s coverings seem good, because one can rise to their level of spiritual growth, but in the end, those same coverings also limit growth according to the limitations of the one who covers.

(In my own experience, I found that when I rejected the word of the Lord and placed myself under man’s covering, I took upon myself his limitations and his problems as well. I learned a valuable lesson by hard experience.)

This was the core spiritual problem that arose when the people demanded to be ruled by a man, rather than to be ruled by God alone ([1 Sam. 8:7](#)). When the people looked to Saul for leadership, they followed him in his rebellion against God. [1 Sam. 13:13, 14](#) says,

¹³ And Samuel said to Saul, “You have acted foolishly; you have not kept the commandment of the Lord your God, which He commanded you, for now the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. ¹⁴ But now your kingdom shall not endure. The Lord has sought for Himself a man after His own heart, and the Lord has appointed him as ruler over His people, because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you.

As we have stated so often, Saul was a type of the church, for he was crowned on the day of Pentecost, or “wheat harvest” ([1 Sam. 12:17](#)). He represents the kingdom of God under the temporary rule of the tribe of Benjamin prior to the full kingdom ruled by Judah (David). So also have we seen the rule of the church under Pentecost for the past forty Jubilees. It had problems of rebellion from its second Jubilee cycle, even as Saul rebelled as early as his second year ([1 Sam. 13:1 KJV](#)).

The Roman church, believing its earthly organization to be “the church,” is of the opinion that it will never be overthrown, nor will its rule ever end. It does not believe or teach the story of Saul and David. The Roman church has been a rebellious church for many centuries and has persecuted its “davids” even as Saul did. Like Saul, the Roman church usurped the authority of Christ, and like Saul, they had the audacity to believe that they did so with God’s approval—or at least with immunity from divine prosecution.

And so the verdict is given in [Rev. 13:10](#). Those destined for captivity must go into captivity. Those who live by the sword must die by the sword. These were common sayings in that time showing that divine justice will prevail in the end. No race, nation, or earthly church can claim immunity when it is in rebellion against God. Divine justice is dispensed impartially.

No one can claim immunity on the grounds of having a special relationship with God. The Jews made this mistake in earlier times. The Roman church (and many other churches) have made the same mistake in later times. Yet the key to understanding this entire issue is knowing the story of Saul and David and how they functioned as types of the church and the overcomers. The keys of the kingdom are not given to Rome or any other city, but to those who possess the keys of revelation that open up the “key” Scriptures to our understanding.

Endurance and Faith of the Saints

[Rev. 13:10](#) says that this principle of equal justice “*is the perseverance and the faith of the saints.*” What does this mean? The idea of faith alone is emphasized by Paul in [Rom. 4:4, 5](#). James emphasizes works as the *evidence* of faith ([James 2:17, 18](#)). The book of Hebrews focuses upon endurance, or *perseverance* ([Heb. 12:1](#)), which appears to be a subset of the “works” that James taught. But in [Rev. 13:10](#) we see both faith and endurance as practical qualities of the saints being persecuted by the beast from the sea.

In view of the fact that this beast was destined to overpower the saints for a season, it was important to have both faith and endurance. While there were always many differing opinions within the ranks of the Roman church (even to this day), the most serious “sin” in its eyes was to refuse to believe that the Roman church was the *true church* and that salvation came only through church membership. In other words, to put it in Old Testament terms, one had to remain under Saul’s covering, rather than joining David’s band of men hiding as “criminals” in the caves and forests.

Most of those who were tortured and killed were those who renounced the covering of the Roman church, believing that the true church was composed of membership in the book of life in heaven ([Heb. 12:23](#)). Just because the Roman church baptized someone and considered him to be in good standing did not mean that he was a genuine Christian. Being a true Christian had to do with one’s faith in Christ alone, they said. *Faith in the church is not the same as faith in Christ.* That is the key issue. When we consider the scandals of pedophilia that have exposed many priests, bishops,

and even cardinals in Rome, all of whom were “Christians” as defined by the Roman church, are we to agree with them? Are we not rather to believe God’s word than man’s interpretation?

Is it possible to say that such pedophiles have faith and endurance? What is endurance? Is it the ability to remain as a church member while ignoring the immoral behavior of its leaders? Is it not rather the ability of its men of faith to endure the persecution that comes from the church when they raise objections? Where does our loyalty lie?

Loyalty usually comes down to a choice. In this case, when the church does wrong, *shall we remain loyal to the church or to Christ?* Our loyalty is evidence of where we have placed our faith. And since most people have faith in both the church and in Christ, it really boils down to which one we recognize as a higher authority when one must choose. In the end, “*no man can serve two masters*” ([Matt. 6:24](#)).

The Case of Jonathan

Jonathan was the son of Saul and the heir to the throne. However, Jonathan loved David ([1 Sam. 18:1](#)) and knew that David was truly called to be the next king of Israel. When Jonathan was commanded to kill David, he refused ([1 Sam. 19:1, 2](#)). His disloyalty to his father brought wrath upon him, and Saul even threw his spear at him ([1 Sam. 20:30, 31, 32, 33](#)).

But Jonathan is a tragic figure, because he remained in Saul’s house until the day of his death. Though he loved David, he died with Saul ([1 Sam. 31:2, 3, 4](#)).

Jonathan represents a true believer who remains loyal to the house of Saul. As a prophetic type, he represents those Roman Catholics who genuinely have faith in Christ, but who also remain loyal to the Saul-church. Perhaps they represent all those who lamented over the immorality of the Vatican during the “golden age of pornocracy” that characterized the early tenth century. Perhaps they also represent those who abhorred the torture and murder of the Inquisitions from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries.

In the end we can only trust God to judge each case righteously. Is it possible to be an overcomer within the house of Saul? The case of Jonathan may be evidence that it is possible. However, what shall we say when we look at his end? Jonathan died with his father and was therefore unable to be part of David’s government.

I would not say that such “jonathans” will die like Jonathan, of course, nor even that they will lose their salvation. The judgment of the law is not applicable in the same way to each individual within the bigger prophetic picture. Everyone must be treated as individuals, and each person is unique. But surely this speaks some truth that ought to be applied in various ways according to each individual situation in the day that divine judgment falls upon the modern house of Saul—the Roman church.

Chapter 3: The Beast from the Earth

[Revelation 13:11, 12](#) says,

¹¹ And I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spoke as a dragon. ¹² And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence. And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed.

John pictures this second beast as a covert dragon that looked like a lamb. Does this not describe a secret organization that is made to look harmless, but in fact is deadly?

Secondly, the second beast does not come to power until the first has received a deadly wound and then is healed. History shows that this second beast was, in fact, the one fighting the sea beast and using Napoleon to inflict the deadly wound. However, in a strange twist, the earth beast ends up supporting the first beast through some sort of alliance or accommodation.

Having established that the French Revolution (1789–1794) brought the dominance of the sea beast to a close after 1,260 years, we must ask: Who or what organization was actually behind the French Revolution of 1789–1794? It is necessary to answer this question in order to explain the statement in [Rev. 13:12](#), where the second beast causes men to worship its predecessor, the first beast (i.e., the Roman Church). A related question is this: WHY did the second beast defer to the first beast?

There is no question that the Revolution was fomented by secret societies that were well funded. The Masonic Order has always laid claim to the Revolution, but they needed funding for such a grandiose project. Who funded them? It is also well known that by 1782 the Masonic Order had been infiltrated by another organization called the Illuminati, which actually directed the Revolution. Who were they?

The Illuminati

The Illuminati was founded on May 1, 1776 by a Jesuit-trained professor of canon law named Adam Weishaupt. He had lost his job at Ingolstadt University when the Jesuits were dissolved in 1773. A group of Jewish bankers thought he might be useful to their cause against the Roman church, so they financed his Illuminati Order. He became a Freemason shortly afterward in 1777 in order to try to use it for his own purposes. He had no success until 1780, when Freiherr von Knigge joined his cause.

On July 16, 1782, representatives of all of the secret societies gathered at the Congress of Willhelmsbad, and “*the alliance between Illuminism and Freemasonry was finally sealed*” (Nesta Webster, [World Revolution](#), p. 31). However, in 1785 an Illuminati messenger named Lanze was struck down by lightning, and instructions from the Order were found sown into the lining of his coat. Weishaupt’s plans were discovered, and the houses of Swack and Bassus were raided. Authorities seized incriminating evidence, and these documents were made public under the name of *The Original Writings of the Order of the Illuminati* (1787).

The Order was officially suppressed and was forced to go underground. The French Revolution continued as planned a few years later, but largely without Weishaupt’s direct leadership. Having been exposed, he was watched carefully. His sponsors found other leaders to carry out the plan.

Mendelssohn and Rothschild

There are many articles and some books which claim that the Rothschilds financed Weishaupt in launching the Illuminati in 1776. However, there is no evidence that the original founder of the House of Rothschild, Mayer Amschel Bauer, came into any serious wealth until 1796–1798, some years after the French Revolution had concluded.

Although he and his sons played a large role in the time of the earth beast in the next two centuries, it was not Rothschild money or planning which launched the Illuminati at its start.

According to Pawns in the Game, written by the Canadian Naval Commander William Guy Carr, Weishaupt was funded by Moses Mendelssohn, a very wealthy Jewish banker in his acquaintance. There seems to be no doubt the Jewish bankers would have benefited from the overthrow of the Church in France—as well as giving them financial control over Freemasonry in Europe. However, they usually contented themselves with remaining in the background and simply helping the enemies of their great rival power, the Roman Church.

First of all, Carr tells us that Mayer Amschel Bauer, who later took the surname Rothschild, was a poor man at first. On page 25 he says,

“A few years after his father’s death, Amschel Mayer Bauer was employed by the Oppenheimer Bank as a clerk.”

This tells us that the Rothschild family did not inherit any wealth from previous generations, for if they had inherited wealth, Mayer would have been hiring others to work in a bank of his own. Instead, we find him a mere bank clerk working for another wealthy Jewish banking family. The Oppenheims were already wealthy bankers, along with Moses Mendelssohn and others.

In the two biographical volumes, The House of Rothschild, by Niall Ferguson, he says the Rothschilds did not have much wealth in the 1770’s. Their wealth came primarily after Mayer Amschel developed a relationship with Prince William IX of Landgrave, after he came to the throne in 1785—nine years *after* the Illuminati was founded (1776). Niall Ferguson writes in Vol. I, page 61,

“The truth was that, despite his efforts to gain a foothold at William’s court while he was still residing in Hanau, Mayer Amschel was still to all intents and purposes a nobody when the new Landgrave moved north to Kassel on his father’s death in 1785.”

We also learn that Mayer Amschel’s financial rise came after he met Karl Friedrich Buderus, who had moved to Kassel in 1792. Buderus had gotten his start by tutoring William’s illegitimate children. In Vol. 1, page 62 we read,

“The first sign of tacit co-operation between Buderus and Rothschild came in 1794 when the former explicitly recommended that Mayer Amschel be allowed to join five established firms in bidding for the sale of 15,000 of English bills. Evidently, his recommendation was ignored, but Buderus tried again in 1796 and this time succeeded.”

Hence, Rothschild was unable to break into the banking world in any meaningful way until 1796. Prior to that he was a middle-class coin and antique dealer. Ferguson again says on page 45,

“However, the speed with which Mayer Amschel’s wealth grew in the 1790s marked a real break with his earlier business activity. At the beginning of the 1790s Mayer Amschel Rothschild was no more than a prosperous antique-dealer. By 1797 he was one of the richest Jews in Frankfurt, and a central part of his business was unmistakably banking. The evidence for this breakthrough is unequivocal. In 1795 the official figure for Mayer Amschel’s taxable wealth was doubled to 4,000 gulden; a year later he was moved into the top tax bracket, with property worth more than 15,000 gulden; and in the same year he was listed as the tenth richest man in the Judengasse with taxable wealth of over 60,000 gulden. Thanks largely to Mayer Amschel, the Rothschilds had become one of the eleven richest families in the Judengasse by 1800.”

Mayer Amschel had been a moderately successful antique coin dealer and small-time stock broker, but he had nowhere near the wealth of his contemporary Jewish bankers in the 1770’s. And so, while the Rothschilds ultimately rose to positions of world power, it is very unlikely that Mayer Amschel Bauer, the Rothschild patriarch, played any

significant role in the French Revolution of 1789. And he had no money to finance Adam Weishaupt and his Illuminati in 1776. His role came later after rising in wealth that gave him respect among his wealthy Jewish peers.

Besides Moses Mendelssohn, Weishaupt associated with other Jewish bankers. Nesta Webster says on page 228 of her book, Secret Societies and Subversive Movements,

“It has frequently been suggested that his [Weishaupt’s] real inspirers were Jews, and the Jewish writer Bernard Lazare definitely states that ‘there were Jews, Cabalistic Jews, around Weishaupt.’ A writer in La Vieille France went so far as to designate these Jews as Moses Mendelssohn, Wessely, and the bankers Itzig, Friedlander, and Meyer. But no documentary evidence has ever been produced in support of these statements.”

Webster does not even list Rothschild among the known associates of Weishaupt. She writes on page 230,

“Whether, then Weishaupt was directly inspired by Mendelssohn or any other Jew must remain for the present an open question. But the Jewish connexions of certain other Illuminati cannot be disputed. The most important of these was Mirabeau, who arrived in Berlin just after the death of Mendelssohn and was welcomed by his disciples in the Jewish salon of Henrietta Herz. It was these Jews, ‘ardent supporters of the French Revolution’ at its outset, who prevailed on Mirabeau to write his great apology for their race under the form of a panegyric of Mendelssohn.”

The Jewish Encyclopedia’s article on Freemasonry says, “*Jews have been most conspicuous in connexion with Freemasonry in France since the Revolution.*” No doubt this influence was purchased by financial support. Nor was this influence only monetary. In the late 1700’s the basic three degrees of Freemasonry was expanded to 33 degrees. The 32nd degree culminated with teachings directly from the Jewish Cabala. Anyone who has studied Albert Pike’s Morals and Dogma can see plainly that the upper degrees of the Scottish Rite from the 26th to the 32nd degree teach directly out of the Cabbala, the mystical Jewish writings.

In other words, the plain goal of Masonry is to Judaize non-Jews in the upper degrees. This, in turn, was designed to prepare them for the more “enlightened” (i.e., Satanic) degrees in more secretive organizations that stood above the 33rd degree of Freemasonry.

Weishaupt’s Successors

Perhaps the most revealing evidence of Weishaupt’s Jesuit connection is found in an article from *The Catholic Encyclopedia* under “Weishaupt. There we learn that this same man who continually expressed utter contempt and hatred for the Church, died in 1830 as a reconciled Roman Catholic!! It reads:

“As early as 16 February 1785, Weishaupt had fled from Ingolstadt, and in 1787 he settled at Gotha ... After 1787 he renounced all active connexion with secret societies, and again drew near to the Church, displaying remarkable zeal in the building of the Catholic church at Gotha. He died on 18 November 1830, ‘reconciled with the Catholic Church, which as a youthful professor, he had doomed to death and destruction’—as the chronicle of the Catholic parish in Gotha relates.”

The article above is unclear as to when Weishaupt reconciled with the church. It just says that this happened “after 1787,” shortly after the Illuminati had been exposed and officially suppressed. His reconciliation with the Roman church, which he had professed to hate for so many years, is difficult to believe, unless it was part of the overall “holy alliance” between the Masonic kings and the popes. In other words, the alliance made room for Freemasons within Catholicism itself, though officially they remained at odds. This probably gave Weishaupt opportunity to do his revolutionary work in a safer environment hidden within the Roman church.

When the Illuminati Order was suppressed officially in 1785, Weishaupt’s exposure ended his primary usefulness. Most Freemasons left the Illuminati. Weishaupt’s mission suffered a huge setback. Nonetheless, the French Revolution continued as planned, showing that the plot to overthrow France was bigger than Weishaupt. In fact, it was carried

out, not under the direction of Weishaupt's Illuminati, but under the watchful eye of the Masonic monarchs, who led the lodges in each of their countries.

Even so, The Illuminati organization continued covertly under new names. We do not know if Weishaupt himself was a Satanist, but certainly his successors were. Weishaupt remained as the secret head of the Illuminati until his death in 1830. In 1834 he was succeeded by Giuseppe Mazzini of Italy (1805–1872), a 33° Mason. Mazzini's Luciferian protégé in America, Albert Pike, was fast-tracked in 1859 to become the head of Scottish Rite Freemasonry that was based in Charleston, SC.

Albert Pike set up five strategic Councils around the world: Washington D.C., Montevideo (South America), Naples (Italy), Calcutta (India), and Mauritius (Africa). He conspired with Mazzini, Lord Henry Palmerston of England (1784–1865, 33°), and Otto von Bismarck from Germany (1815–1898, 33°).

When Mazzini died in 1872, Pike appointed Adriano Lemmi, a banker from Florence, Italy to head up their subversive European activities until his death in 1896. The fact that Pike was able to appoint Lemmi shows that Pike himself was, by this time, the (hired) head of the Illuminati organization as a whole. It had not disappeared when Weishaupt was exposed, nor did Weishaupt cease his secret activities. He simply found opportunity to work covertly within the Roman church to give the appearance of piety and philanthropy (in building a church). One might also ask where he accumulated enough money to finance building a church. It seems probable that he was receiving regular dues from members of a secret organization.

Weishaupt's reconciliation with the church was part of a general plan for Freemasons to infiltrate the Catholic Church and eventually to take over its leadership. Rather than keep the two sides distinct, we find thereafter many Catholic Freemasons, and by the twentieth century we even see Freemason popes leading the church. This is the ultimate result of the Holy Alliance.

Chapter 4: The Guardians of Papal Treasure

For four decades, as I studied the power structure of the modern beast, I noted that historians differed in their opinion as to who actually was in control of the present Babylonian system. Most of these historians agreed that the world is controlled by money and banking, but they did not agree on who controlled the big banks.

This question is vital to understanding the beast from the earth and his relationship with the beast from the sea. [Rev. 13:12](#) says of the second beast,

¹² And he exercises [or executes] all the authority of the first beast in his presence. And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed.

This is an unusual situation. The second beast “*exercises all the authority of the first beast,*” and yet “*he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast.*” In all previous cases where a beast has arisen, he has overthrown the previous beast, making him subservient. Whenever we see something unusual, we must examine it more closely to find out why it is so.

The first thing we see is that the authority itself was indeed transferred from the first to the second beast. Yet in spite of this, we see a cooperation of some kind being set up, wherein the conquered beast, having been brought back to life, is allowed to be worshipped as in previous times. In other words, the second beast does not want to be worshipped, for that would necessitate being out in the open. This second beast prefers to remain hidden and to keep the previous beast in place as the visible object of worship.

The Mystery

Such an arrangement comes out clearly in later chapters, where “the great harlot” carries the name “Mystery Babylon.” The term mystery comes from *musterion*, which means secret or hidden. Hence, the transition of power from the first beast to the second is the point where the beast empires (going back to Babylon) *went underground so that they might rule in secret*. Its secretive nature is even suggested by the fact that it was kept secret from Daniel himself. Only John exposes it for us to see.

There seems to be no other compelling reason for God to keep the final beast hidden from Daniel, other than to illustrate its secretive nature. Furthermore, because the first beast continued to be worshipped even after receiving a fatal wound, that first beast visibly appears to rule until the authority is transferred to the saints of the Most High.

Not understanding this has caused many researchers to believe that the Vatican continues to rule the earth by its control of Western law and all corporations based upon that law. It is also argued often that the Vatican controls the Federal Reserve. But [Rev. 13:12](#) does not support such a belief. John tells us that a new beast arose after 1,260 years, which secretly took all the authority of the first beast, while leaving that first beast as a visible object of worship in the world. In other words, the financial beast from the earth rules over the religious beast from the sea (Holy See).

The Boast

Obviously, proof in the form of signed documents are in short supply, for such papers would defeat the whole purpose of this secret arrangement. Without such hard proof, we have only Scripture at our disposal, which we may believe or disbelieve. Nonetheless, there have always been a few in each generation in the top echelons of power who know of this arrangement. It is inevitable that pieces of information would be leaked, especially since it is the nature of carnal men to want to boast of their power.

And so we find such a boast, written tersely with no explanation, in *The Jewish Encyclopedia* itself. The key is found in an article on the Rothschilds (See Vol. X), where it is written,

“It is a somewhat curious sequel to the attempt to set up a Catholic competitor to the Rothschilds that at the present time the latter are the guardians of the papal treasure.”

<http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/12909-rothschild>

In other words, the Rothschilds became the “guardians” of the Vatican’s wealth, holding the key to Rome’s money. When this arrangement began—or what it means to be a “guardian”—is not stated, but the context of the article above states that a Catholic bank, Union Générale, had been set up in 1876 as to compete with the Jewish Rothschild banks, hoping the Vatican would entrust them—instead of the Rothschilds—with their money. This Rothschild competitor apparently did not realize that the Vatican had lost control of its own finances at the time of the Holy Alliance. It was, therefore, unable to entrust its money to a Catholic bank, even if it wanted to do so.

Was it by choice that the Roman church continued to utilize a Jewish bank rather than a Catholic bank? If the choice had been left to the Vatican, it seems logical that they would have entrusted their money to Catholics who respected the spiritual authority of the church. But the Vatican seemed to ignore the Catholic bank, and the Rothschilds retained control over the Vatican accounts. Why?

The key is in understanding what a *guardian* is. Black’s Law Dictionary defines a guardian as:

“A guardian is a person lawfully invested with the power, and charged with the duty, of taking care of the person and managing the property and rights of another person who, for some peculiarity of status, or defect of age, understanding, or self-control, is considered incapable of administering his own affairs.”

A guardian is appointed to exercise authority over the financial affairs of a minor, or someone who is mentally impaired, or one who suffers from a lack of self-control. Control of the owner’s finances is entrusted to the guardian who has understanding. Recall that the Apostle Paul said in [Gal. 4:1–3](#),

¹ Now I say, as long as the heir is a child, he does not differ at all from a slave although he is the owner of everything, ² but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by the father. ³ So also we, while we were children, were held in bondage under the elemental things of the world.

Children say that they own certain things, but their ownership is subject to the will of a parent and is therefore not absolute. So also the nations of The Holy Alliance in 1815 subjected the Vatican to certain terms by which the church would be allowed to be reinstated as a religion to be *worshipped*. The popes were legally declared to be mere children, minors, under the guardianship of others. Their “treasure,” i.e., bank accounts, property, buildings, art, etc. came under the guardianship of the Rothschild banks.

There is no doubt that *The Jewish Encyclopedia* used the term *guardian* as a precise legal term. It suggests that the Roman church had been allowed to survive its deadly wound only on condition that it turned over its property and finances to the Rothschilds as their legal guardians. Thus, the Vatican had to admit legally that it was incapable of administering its own affairs on account of its past excesses.

Doubtless, it was the powers of The Holy Alliance that discussed this issue, bringing up earlier fears of Jesuit power. It seems that they agreed to allow the Jesuit Order to be reinstated, along with the church itself, on condition that their money be spent with certain limitations at the approval of the Rothschilds, *acting as agents of the world powers*.

The Bankers of the Holy Alliance

The Rothschilds were the “bankers to the Holy Alliance,” as Niall Ferguson says in two statements on the same page in Vol. II, [The House of Rothschild](#):

“Thus by the end of 1822 the Rothschilds could justifiably be regarded as bankers to the Holy Alliance...” (p. 127)

“The final coup which completed the Rothschilds’ emergence as ‘bankers to the Holy Alliance’ came in 1822 with the loan to Russia.” (p. 127)

He was referring to the Rothschilds emerging as the main banker who gave loans to the big three nations of the day, showing the stature of this banking house by this time. It adds credence to the Rothschild’s appointment as “guardians of the papal treasure” earlier in 1815.

Ferguson also quotes the sons of Mayer Amschel Rothschild, who recalled their father’s words:

“Our late father taught us that if a high-placed person enters into [financial] partnership with a Jew, he belongs to the Jew” (The House of Rothschild, Vol. II, p. 77).

It is apparent, then, that the Rothschilds became the legal guardians of the Vatican in 1815 and that this became more apparent in 1822.

The Rothschilds and the Royals

The Rothschilds themselves were the guardians, but this did not mean that they held actual power over the Vatican—at least not at first. Their power increased over time, of course, and gradually they were able to use the power of money to assert their will upon monarchs and nations. Certainly, they would have remembered the words of the Rothschild patriarch, and they would have worked toward subjecting the monarchs by the power of mounting debt. But this took some time. Meanwhile, their loans made them business partners, but as debt piled up, the lenders became the real masters.

Power continually shifted over the years, as nations (including the church) plotted daily to increase their own power at the expense of the others. In 1917 Russia was overthrown by Rothschilds and other banking interests. In 1929 the pope signed the Lateran Treaty with Mussolini, in which the papacy received a \$90 million “donation” from the state of Italy as recompense for their loss of the Papal States in the 1860’s. This money had increased through investment to \$2 billion by 1939 and was used to set up the Institute for Religious Agencies (Vatican Bank) on June 27, 1942.

The question is whether or not the Vatican Bank obtained genuine independence from Rothschild guardianship, once it seemed to be able to manage its own finances. The Vatican Bank became a major money laundering bank, not only for fleeing war criminals after World War II, but throughout the decades afterward. I do not know if these activities were done with the approval of the Rothschild banks or not, but the recent attempts by Pope Francis to clean up the banks has run into huge internal roadblocks within the Vatican itself.

Regardless of the changing situation over the past two centuries, if the Rothschild banks were appointed guardians over the financial affairs of the Vatican, it means the earth beast retained background control over the sea beast. Yet it is important to recognize that the Rothschilds in 1815 were *appointed* by the big three powers after the fall of Napoleon: Russia, Germany, and Austria. The Rothschilds did not dictate the terms, but positioned themselves to be entrusted with this guardianship.

Much of this arrangement has surely changed by now, as no such agreement can survive the ever-changing power shifts in history. But while such changes may be interesting, they are not fully relevant to the details established in Revelation 13. John saw only a brief outline and gave us only a short description of this final beast. The most important factor, however, is that the second beast was allied with the first beast while itself remaining secretive, allowing the first beast to remain to be openly worshipped as in previous centuries.

Chapter 5: Authority and Accountability

It is a principle of divine law that authority and accountability (or liability) come in equal measure. If someone is given authority, then he is accountable to God for the way that he uses his authority. The more authority he has, the more accountable he is before God. Conversely, a slave has only a small level of accountability.

When God brought Israel out of Egypt, He “chose” the nation by giving it authority, and with it came an equal measure of accountability spelled out in the divine law itself. Hence, when Israel misused its authority, God brought in other nations and put Israel under their authority until Israel repented. Then God raised up a judge to set them free and to restore Israel’s authority in the world.

The underlying purpose of Israel’s authority, of course, was to set up the Kingdom of God on the earth and to fulfill the Abrahamic call to be a blessing to all families of the earth. Israel as a whole failed to fulfill this calling, Paul says, but the remnant of grace succeeded or will yet succeed ([Rom. 11:7](#)). The problem is that the remnant of grace never actually had the authority to rule the earth throughout Israel’s history in the old land. That authority was granted to the kings of Judah, who had been granted the scepter ([1 Chron. 5:1, 2](#)). Too few of those kings were part of the remnant of grace. They were mere *Jews*.

So God finally decreed a long captivity of Israel and Judah that was to last “seven times,” or 2,520 years. During this time, the authority was given to beast nations—those who desired to serve themselves and to enslave others. In short, they knew nothing of the Abrahamic calling, and even if they had heard of it, they had no intention of fulfilling that role. Their goal was *to be blessed*, not to be a blessing to others.

One beast empire after another rose and fell in its time, in accordance with Daniel’s visions. As we have already shown, the “little horn” extension of the fourth (iron) beast was given more than half of the “seven times.” John’s revelation then shows that after 1,260 years the little horn, in the form of the beast from the sea, was to receive a fatal wound, after which time a beast from the earth would raise him back to life and restore his position as the object of men’s worship. Nonetheless, this would come at a price, for this second beast would retain hidden authority over the first in exchange for his services.

I believe that this new arrangement lasted just 200 years from the signing of the “Holy Alliance” in 1815 to the year 2014, when the judgment (decree) of God decreed the transfer of authority to the remnant of grace (the overcomers). After one year passed (October of 2015), the legal time of redemption had passed ([Lev. 25:30](#)), and the beasts were unable to redeem themselves or their “walled city” (i.e., Babylon). The year 2015, then, fully ended the beast’s authority insofar as the divine mandate was concerned.

The Mercy of God

Men often complain about the judgments of God, and they seek to exempt themselves from the hardships of such slavery. While there is certainly much that the remnant of grace can do *as individuals* during the general time of slavery, they have been unable to overturn the original divine decrees giving authority to those who are unworthy to rule the earth. The timing of this judgment was set a long time ago, and it did not end until the appointed time (2014–2015).

The good purpose of such judgment, however, is usually missed, because we are accustomed to thinking outside of the divine law. God removed authority from Israel, not so that Israel would be destroyed, but so that the liability for their failure would shift to the vessels of dishonor. To be in “dishonor” before the divine court means literally “to fail to pay, as a note.” That is, one is in dishonor if the court has a complaint against him for failing to honor a contract or debt. Vessels of dishonor ([2 Tim. 2:20](#)) are men or nations who are given authority over the earth, but who fail to fulfill the Abrahamic calling.

Paul makes the point in [Gal. 4:1–3](#) that collectively, we were as children prior to the time of Christ. As such, we were under guardians and tutors, lacking both the skill and the full authority to fulfill the Abrahamic calling. Israel failed on account of this character impediment. Further, there were not enough “remnants of grace” to take the reins of Kingdom government, because God intended to choose just a few from each generation for this purpose. It is only now that the full government can be established, and most of these must yet be raised from the dead in order to join with those who are alive and remain. Only then can the remnant be ready to rule the Kingdom.

Meanwhile, even the remnant of grace was subjected to the dominion of beast governments. First of all, God’s purpose was to train them through persecution and by showing them examples of how NOT to rule. Secondly, God’s purpose was to shield them from the full liability inherent in such authority until they had time to grow to spiritual maturity and be qualified to rule perfectly.

For this reason, the beasts at the end of the age will be held accountable for not bringing righteousness into the earth in accordance with the Kingdom of God. It will not be the remnant of grace—nor even the believers themselves—who will be held accountable, other than God holding them personally accountable as individuals.

The bottom line is that throughout the past, God has seen fit to shift authority to vessels of dishonor in order to spare His people until they are ready to shoulder such responsibility. For this reason, the shift in authority must come about the time of the resurrection and “change” which qualifies them fully to rule the Kingdom successfully and unendingly.

Jesus Warns the Jewish Leaders

In [Matt. 21:33–40](#) Jesus told a parable about the vineyard—that is, the Kingdom. He makes it clear that the husbandmen of the vineyard were given authority to bring forth the fruits of the Kingdom while the Owner went on a journey ([Matt. 21:33](#)). Those husbandmen, however, refused to render Him the fruits of the vineyard. They killed the Owner’s servants (the prophets) and finally, when the Son Himself was sent, they recognized Him and plotted to kill Him as well ([Matt. 21:38](#)).

Jesus then asked the Jewish leaders how the Owner of the vineyard would judge the situation. [Matt. 21:41](#) says,

⁴¹ They said to Him, “He will bring those wretches to a wretched end, and will rent out the vineyard to other vine-growers who will pay him the proceeds at the proper seasons.”

Jesus allowed them to judge themselves, for they did not realize until later ([Matt. 21:45](#)) that they themselves were “those wretches.” Jesus then offered them a warning, which had great significance. [Matt. 21:42–44](#) speaks of two stones that would bring judgment upon them. (Stoning was the common method of capital punishment in that time.)

The first “stone” was the one that the builders had rejected, as seen in [Psalm 118:22, 23](#). Jesus brought up this prophecy to show that the husbandmen had rejected Him as the Messiah. This explained the killing of the Son in the parable.

The second “stone” was the one that was to be cut out of the mountain without hands in [Dan. 2:34, 35, 44, 45](#), which was to crush the four empires represented by the image of the beast in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream. How was this second stone relevant to Jesus’ parable and to His discussion with the chief priests and Pharisees? Jesus said in [Matt. 21:43, 44](#),

⁴³ Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you, and be given to a nation producing the fruit of it. ⁴⁴ And he who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust.

Daniel had prophesied that this stone “*struck the statue on its feet... and crushed them*” ([Dan. 2:34](#)). Further, we read that the entire image “*became like chaff from the summer threshing floors*” ([Dan. 2:35](#)). But what does this have to do with the Jewish leaders?

Jesus was warning them prophetically that if they were to obtain authority as part of the beast image, they would be ground up and scattered like dust when the great stone struck the feet of the image. In other words, if they were ever to gain power toward the end of the time of the beast kingdoms, they would be held accountable for the actions of the beast itself. This, of course, is precisely what has happened, for Jesus spoke prophetically in His warning.

The Rothschilds Seek Power

The beast from the earth coincides with the rise of the Rothschilds, who were given authority as “guardians of the papal treasure.” During the past two centuries, the Rothschilds sought to gain power, so that they could obtain authority as the beast of the earth—the final beast that was to arise before the stone crushed the image.

Jesus’ warning, then, was directed against the Rothschilds themselves, along with their wealthy Jewish partners in the banking world. Revelation 13 describes this beast ever so briefly, but the Holy Spirit chose to reveal the beast by two main characteristics or achievements. The first we see in [Rev. 13:13](#),

¹³ And he performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men.

This is a simple description of an atomic bomb being dropped out of a plane flying high in the heavens. To a lesser extent this also refers to missiles in general, which fly to their targets. We do not know if John had an actual vision of this, or if he was informed by a word alone, but this was fulfilled in 1945 when the United States dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The second characteristic showing the main activity of the earth beast is given in financial terms, which shows the rise of modern banking in which some aspects were invented by Mayer Amschel Rothschild himself. In Volume 1 of the book, [The House of Rothschild, Money’s Prophets](#), page 6, Niall Ferguson says,

“Indeed, it can be argued that, by modifying the existing system for government borrowing to make bonds more easily tradable, the Rothschilds actually created the international bond market in its modern form.”

On page 17, he says,

“Not only had the Rothschilds replaced the old aristocracy, they also represented a new materialist religion. ‘[M]oney is the god of our time,’ declared Heine in March 1841, ‘and Rothschild is his prophet’.”

The church had been materialistic in many ways for a long time, of course, but the Jewish poet, Heinrich Heine, recognized that under Rothschild a new form of “materialist religion” had begun to develop. It was centered on banking and reached a climax a century later with the advent of fiat money creation.

The Federal Reserve Act was passed on Dec. 23, 1913, 2,520 years after Babylon was organized into an empire in 607 B.C. By this new power to create money out of nothing and loan it to nations at interest, the beast from the earth gained power over the nations through debt slavery.

Chapter 6: The Mark of the Beast

The beast from the earth, John prophesied, would be characterized by two notable things. First is the misuse of nature, or more specifically, weaponizing nature (atoms) for the purpose of subduing and enslaving other nations. Second, was the misuse of commerce, using money to enslave others. So the beast from the earth created weapons of mass destruction as well as a financial system that would allow no one to carry out commerce apart from using the money that they created.

[Revelation 13:14](#), [15](#) says,

¹⁴ And he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life. ¹⁵ And there was given to him to give breath [*pneuma*, “spirit”] to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast might even speak and cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed.

Deception

The first thing John tells us is that the second beast is deceptive. The irony is in the fact that the beast, which has arisen from the earth “*deceives those who dwell on the earth.*” An important biblical metaphor is that if we are of the earth, then we are in the image of the first Adam. In spite of this, we are to rise above the earth as sons of God. Paul says in [1 Cor. 15:47](#),

⁴⁷ The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven.

The implication is that if we set our minds on heavenly things, we will not be deceived by earthly things or by the beast from the earth. [Deut. 11:8](#), [16](#), and [18](#) instruct us,

⁸ You shall therefore keep every commandment which I am commanding you today... ¹⁶ Beware, lest your hearts be deceived and you turn away and serve other gods and worship them... ¹⁸ You shall therefore impress these words of mine on your heart and on your soul; and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontals on your forehead.

The law of God was the antidote to worshiping false gods. To prevent deception, we must (figuratively) bind the word of God on our foreheads and on our hands. This puts the mark of God upon us, and it is the opposite of the mark of lawlessness that was put upon Cain ([Gen. 4:15, KJV](#)). The desire of every true believer is to receive the mark (*tav*, “mark, sign, signature,”) of God upon his forehead, identifying him as a bond slave of Jesus Christ.

The Mark

Originally written as an X or as a cross, this mark was placed on God’s chosen ones before the destruction of Jerusalem in [Ezekiel 9:4](#),

⁴ And the Lord said to him, “Go through the midst of the city, even through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark [*tav*] on the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations which are being committed in its midst.

This same manner of speaking is seen in [Rev. 13:16](#),

¹⁶ And he causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the slaves, to be given a mark on their right hand, or on their forehead.

As Deuteronomy 11 shows us, the mark of God prevents the worship of false gods. Conversely, then, the mark of the earth beast signifies that people are worshiping false gods. They are “owned” by those other gods, even as the mark of the true God is a *tav* (mark, signature) of divine ownership.

What, then, is this “mark” or signature in [Rev. 13:16](#)? First, it is no more literal than the “frontals” in [Deut. 11:18](#). The Jews, of course, often set forth their mark of righteousness by literally binding portions of Scripture to their foreheads for all to see. They were called *towphaphah* in Hebrew and *phylakterion* in Greek. Dr. Bullinger tells us in his notes on [Exodus 13:1](#),

“There are two pair of Phylacteries, so called (in Greek) from their use = a prayer-fillet or band worn today on forehead and hands during prayer. First pair here, [Exodus 13:3–10](#) and [13:11–16](#). Second pair in [Deut. 6:4–9](#) and [11:13–21](#).”

This was a “sign” that their thoughts and the works of their hands were bound by the word of God, and that they were obedient to the word. One pair of frontals was taken from the first law (Exodus), and the second was taken from the second law (Deuteronomy). Of course, when we consult the mind of God in this matter, we see that this was never meant to be a literal requirement. At most, it was to be a teaching tool and reminder to be obedient as bond slaves of God. The heart issue was always the goal, not the physical “mark.”

It is the same with the mark of the beast in [Rev. 13:16](#). Those who worship the beast are branded with his signature to mark his slaves. Those who worship God are branded with His signature to indicate divine ownership.

How does one know which mark he has received? Paul tells us in [1 Tim. 6:10](#) that “*the love of money is the root of all sorts of evil*.” Money itself is neutral. The love of money (i.e., greed) is what causes men to go astray and to worship other gods in the earth. Paul’s instruction actually begins earlier and shows us that he was writing on the topic of godliness. [1 Tim. 6:3–10](#) reads,

³ If anyone advocates a different doctrine, and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, ⁴ he is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, ⁵ and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. ⁶ But godliness actually is a means of great gain, when accompanied by contentment. ⁷ For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. ⁸ And if we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. ⁹ But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many a pang.

When men are motivated by the love of money, they are automatically owned by the beast from the earth, whether they know it or not. They bear his mark on their foreheads (minds), and so everything they do by the works of their hands is done in the pursuit of wealth. Wealth is their top priority.

In the prophetic context in Revelation 13, we find that the Jewish bankers, led (at least visibly) by the Rothschilds, were motivated by greed, the love of money, and the pursuit of wealth. In their quest, they finally obtained the privilege to create money itself and to loan it to governments at interest with very little cost to themselves. It is of interest to us that the currency of Germany (until 1999) was the *mark*. Rothschild was from Hamburg, Germany.

The Image (Icon)

[Rev. 13:14](#) speaks of “*an image TO the beast*.” This is how we are to interpret the next verse, which speaks of “*the image OF the beast*.” The image is not a picture of the beast. The image is “of” (originates from) the beast. The image “to” the beast (i.e., given to him) indicates that it is created for the beast and for his purposes.

The word translated “image” is *eikon*, or icon. In [Luke 20:22–25](#) we read about such icons,

²² “Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?” ²³ But He detected their trickery and said to them, ²⁴ “Show me a denarius. Whose likeness [*eikon*, “image”] and inscription [*epigraphe*, “title, writing”] does it have?” And they said, “Caesar’s.” ²⁵ And He said to them, “Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.”

Every coin has an image, or icon, which officially monetizes the metal. Such coins often are struck with the image of the ruler of the nation or empire during whose time the coin was minted. Hence, the “image” is the picture and inscription of the one authorizing the coin. It is not a statue, as so many have pictured it to be. Men worship this image when they have the love of money and when everything they do with their hands is designed to accumulate wealth.

Jesus had no problem using Roman coinage, because He did not worship money, nor did He worship the image of Caesar.

The modern problem reached a culmination point in 1914 when the Federal Reserve Bank was established and certain wealthy Jewish banking families took control of the money supply. US dollars were abolished in favor of Federal Reserve Notes. Other nations’ currencies too came under the control of the powerful banking families. The result was that no one could buy or sell without using these private notes. So [Rev. 13:17](#) says,

¹⁷ and he provides that no one should be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark, either the name of the beast or the number of his name.

There is much more to it than this, of course, for this beast system also turned all men into slaves. Birth certificates were soon required, having a commercial number on them, and these were sent to the Department of Commerce, where each citizen (by his number) is registered as a slave. (The term *citizen* literally means “subject, or slave.”) This is part of Babylonian slavery and commerce as described in [Rev. 18:13](#).

So we see that the beast from the earth rules and enslaves mankind through the power of money creation. Its slave trade is its main commercial venture, and this is accomplished through deception. Few understand how the system works, and so not many understand their position as citizen-slaves of the earth beast.

It is not a sin to be a slave of the system as long as we are bond slaves of Jesus Christ in our manner of life. Such slavery did not start with the earth beast. It began a long time ago when God gave Jerusalem into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. This slavery is the result of sin. It is the divine judgment for the sins of past generations. The financial power that arose 200 years ago was merely the last form of divine judgment before the dominion was returned to the saints of the Most High.

Chapter 7: 666, the Number of His Name

[Revelation 13:18](#) says,

¹⁸ Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of that beast, for the number is that of a man; and his number is six hundred and sixty-six [666].

The Greek text that is translated “*six hundred and sixty-six*” is just three Greek letters *chi*, *xi*, and *sigma*. Like the Hebrews, the Greeks used their letters as numbers, so each letter carries a numeric value. The letter *chi* served as their number for 600, *xi* was their number 60, and *sigma* was their number 6. So by putting these letters together, this was how they wrote the number 666.

The Number Six

John, of course, was well acquainted with these numbers. However, he does not explain this number, other than to tell us that it is the number of “*that beast*” and the number of “*a man*.” Every number has both a positive and a negative side to it, depending upon its application. In biblical numerology, we find that the number six is the number of man, or humanity in general. A triple six would indicate the apex or even the perfection of man, for it is built upon the foundation of the number six.

In biblical law, six days was the time to work, and then the seventh day the people were to rest. Likewise, a slave was to work for six years and then be released for a one-year vacation in the seventh year. This seems to be the underlying reason for the association between 666 and man under the earth beast. Man was to labor six days—that is, 6,000 years—from Adam to the great Sabbath rest known commonly as the Millennium.

For this reason, Moses had to wait six days before he was allowed to go up the mount to meet the Lord in [Exodus 24:16–18](#). This suggests a 6,000 year waiting period of labor on earth before the saints can ascend “*to meet the Lord in the air*” ([1 Thess. 4:17](#)).

The works of the flesh that Paul listed in [Gal. 5:19–21](#) puts witchcraft as the sixth vice. Witchcraft is simply man’s attempt to manipulate others against their will. So Saul’s rebellion against God was “*as the sin of witchcraft*” ([1 Sam. 15:23](#)). Man’s religious rituals often boil down to an earthly attempt to manipulate God (or the gods) into doing something beneficial to man. This is low-level witchcraft.

The good news about the number six is that when we view it as a time cycle, it signifies the END of labor or slavery and the beginning of rest (seven).

Solomon’s Gold

The number 666 appears twice in Scripture, not only in [Rev. 13:18](#) but also in [2 Chron. 9:13](#),

¹³ Now the weight of gold which came to Solomon in one year was 666 talents of gold.

As with so many things, the New Testament must be interpreted with its double witness, the Old Testament. It is plain that in [2 Chron. 9:13](#) the number 666 is associated with gold, which is also used as money. Certainly, this statement has an economic color to it, even as we see in John’s reference. Thus, when we look at John’s statement in its natural flow of the revelation of history, it is remarkable that it would coincide precisely with the rise of the international banking system as invented and developed by the family of Rothschilds.

It is not so much the USE of money, but the LOVE of money that determines if one has the mark of the beast. When everything one does is for the sake of money, it is a “mark of the beast” upon one’s hand. When one constantly schemes how to make more money, it is a “mark of the beast” upon one’s forehead. It does not matter if men justify their greed

by saying that it is for the advancement of the Christian faith or the Kingdom of God. It is still a mark of the beast and the opposite of God's law, which tells us to love God and our neighbor as ourselves.

Solomon's gold, or wealth, was given to him, along with wisdom and peace, in order to build the Kingdom of God in his day. Unfortunately, the last half of his reign was spent in rebellion, for we read in [1 Kings 11:3-5](#),

³ And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines, and his wives turned his heart away. ⁴ For it came about when Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away after other gods; and his heart was not wholly devoted to the Lord his God, as the heart of David his father had been. ⁵ For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians and after Milcom the detestable idol of the Ammonites.

Because of this, God judged him by dividing Israel into two nations, giving the bulk of the tribes to a political rival ([1 Kings 11:11-13](#)). Just as Solomon's sin divided the kingdom, so also today we see the Freemasons obsessed with Solomon, his temple, and his dark arts. Freemasonry is part of the earth beast which is characterized by the number 666.

The main difference is that the earth beast is the final beast system to enslave the earth, bringing us to the end of the time when the divided kingdom will be reunited. To do this, of course, the earth beast must be overthrown first. The result will be that the Scepter of Judah (given to the house of David) will be reunited with the Birthright of Joseph, and thus the full inheritance will be given to the saints of the Most High. In 2014 the Divine Court issued the legal decree to establish this, and we are now seeing the effects of that decree reshaping the world.

The Temple Vessels

Jerusalem was captured by the king of Babylon in 604 B.C. Jehoiakim was the vassal king of Jerusalem under Babylon until he revolted in 597 B.C. Jehoiakim was then killed and replaced by Jehoiachin, who was then just eight years old. He lasted just three months and ten days ([2 Chron. 36:9](#)). Then King Nebuchadnezzar "*brought him to Babylon with the valuable articles of the house of the Lord*" ([2 Chron. 36:10](#)). So the vessels of the temple were taken to Babylon with Jehoiachin in 597 B.C.

[2 Kings 25:13-17](#) gives us an inventory of the temple vessels carried to Babylon. It is interesting to note that neither the altar of incense nor the Ark of the Covenant were listed, for according to the records found by Nehemiah, they had already been hidden by Jeremiah in Mount Nebo. This is recorded in [2 Maccabees 2:4](#),

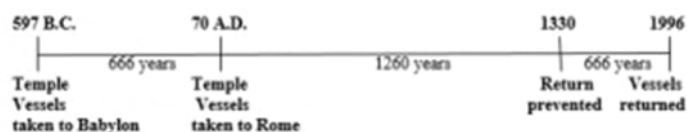
⁴ It was also contained in the same writing, that the prophet, being warned of God, commanded the tabernacle and the ark to go with him, as he went forth into the mountain where Moses climbed up and saw the heritage of God. And when Jeremy came thither, he found an hollow cave, wherein he laid the tabernacle and the ark, and the altar of incense, and so stopped the door.

The deportation of the temple vessels appears to be the most important event to Ezekiel, for he dates his ministry and revelations according to Jehoiachin's captivity in 597 B.C., as we see in [Ezekiel 1:2](#). The importance of this date is seen in history, because 666 years later, the Roman army took Jerusalem and brought the vessels of the temple to Rome. There was no Ark, of course, because that had long disappeared. The Most Holy Place of the second temple was devoid of the Ark, and a stone was left in its place.

The Jews apparently had built a new lampstand to replace the one hidden by Jeremiah, because a lampstand is clearly included on the Arch of Titus among the spoils of war that were taken to Rome.

It is curious also that 1,260 years after 70 A.D. brings us to the year 1330. In 1296 the English had taken the sacred vessels from Scotland to London, but in 1328 the Treaty of Northampton was signed, and the English agreed to return them. In 1330, however, the noblemen in England prevented the king from returning these sacred vessels. These sacred vessels included the Stone of Scone, or Jacob's Pillar, the stone on which the ancient kings of Israel were crowned in

Jerusalem. This Stone was returned in 1996, which was 700 years after being taken to England and 666 years from when it was supposed to be returned.



Hence, we see the chronology as: 666 plus 1,260 years plus 666 years comes to the year 1996. The first 666 was about the sacred temple vessels; the last 666 was about the Coronation Stone. This implies that the Coronation Stone is sacred and is a prophetic type that is connected to the temple vessels in Jerusalem.

But what does this tell us about the meaning of the number 666? It is associated with the captivity of the temple vessels and also with the removal of the Stone signifying the divine right to rule with the Dominion Mandate. Both of these have to do with the long captivity that began in the time of Jeremiah when Babylon took Jerusalem. The earth beast is the final entity that has had the right to put the earth into captivity under these beast systems.

This is also tied to the actions of King Belshazzar of Babylon on the night that Babylon fell. [Dan. 5:2–4](#) tells us that the king was holding a party in which they used the temple vessels to praise “*the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone*” ([Dan. 5:4](#)). This desecration was the final act before the king was killed and Babylon was taken by the kings from the east—the Medes and Persians.

This desecration, when seen in the broader context of the Babylonian captivity itself, depicts temple worship being subjected to false gods that men create in their own image. Such worship has characterized the church of the captivity (Laodicea) without their realizing it. It is also a peculiar characteristic of religious life under the earth beast in general, especially in Freemasonry, which bases its “worship” ceremonies on the temple after Solomon’s apostasy.

The Golden Image

[Daniel 3:1](#) says,

¹ Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, the height of which was sixty cubits and its width six cubits; he set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon.

Note the measure of 60 x 6. If this “image” was actually a statue of a man, the proportions would have been 6:1, rather than 10:1. So if this was a man, he was a very thin man. But it is more likely that it was a pillar with some sort of golden emblem or figure on the top of it. This would explain why no *religious* leaders were assembled, but only “*the satraps, the prefects and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates and all the rulers of the provinces*” ([Dan. 3:3](#)). Although this ceremony was religious in nature, it was designed to set up Babylon’s gold standard—the worship of gold, based on “*the love of money.*”

The numeric value of [Daniel 3:1](#) is precisely 4662, or 666 x 7. This connects the event with the earth beast and the 666 of [Rev. 13:18](#).

As for timing, this event may have recurred 2,520 years later, a period of “seven times.” Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem in 588 B.C., and 2,520 years later brings us to 1933–34, when President Roosevelt declared the United States to be bankrupt, abolished private ownership of gold for all US citizens, and then devalued the dollar by one-third. (Most *American nationals* complied, because they did not understand the law. They mistakenly thought they were *US citizens*.)

Nebuchadnezzar reigned until 560 B.C., the 43rd year of his long reign, and 2,520 years later is the year 1960–61. Nebuchadnezzar’s image was set up some time after the fall of Jerusalem. Daniel does not date this event, however,

so we can only guess its precise date. But if we assume that a 2,520-year parallel event may have occurred, then we might look for a “gold event” some time prior to 1961, but not before the 1930’s.

This event might be linked to the establishment of the World Collateral Accounts in 1947, in which the world pooled its gold in order to rebuild the nations devastated by World War 2. (President Soekarno of Indonesia was put in charge of those accounts.) If this is the parallel event, we might be able to date Nebuchadnezzar’s image of gold 2,520 years earlier in 574 B.C., or the 29th year of his reign.

The establishment of the United Nations, along with the Collateral Accounts in 1947, was the real outcome of the Treaty of Versailles in 1919. This was to be the New World Order during the new 99-year contract from 1919–2018.

Goliath

In the biblical story of David and Goliath, we understand that Goliath was, as it were, larger than life. That is, he was more than just an individual. He was a prophetic type representing the opposition to the Kingdom of God during the time of the church (“Saul”), as well as the giants in the land that Joshua faced in establishing that first Kingdom ([Joshua 11:21, 22](#)).

Goliath was said to be “*six cubits and a span*” ([1 Sam. 17:4](#)). Further, “*the head of his spear weighed six hundred shekels of iron*” ([1 Sam. 17:7](#)). Another giant named Goliath, perhaps the son of the original Goliath, was killed some years later by Elhanan ([2 Sam. 21:19](#)), and then we read in [2 Sam. 21:20](#),

²⁰ And there was war at Gath again, where there was a man of great stature who had six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot, twenty-four in number; and he also had been born to the giant [Goliath].

All of these sixes seem to point to the number 666, identifying the “giant” with the carnal, oppressive systems of the beast nature.

The name *Goliath* means “exile.” When America, Europe, and much of the world came under divine judgment for disobedience, they went into exile, as it were. They were not taken to foreign countries, however, because they came under the wooden yoke of [Jer. 27:12](#), rather than the iron yoke of [Deut. 28:48](#). The wooden yoke represents *captivity without deportation*, whereas the iron yoke of exile is imposed when the people refuse to submit to the judgment of God.

The name *Goliath* comes from the root word *galah*, which means “to go into exile, uncover, remove, or discover.” We can see the giants in the land by observing the skyscrapers in any big city. If you want to know if you are enslaved to Goliath, check your wallet for a DISCOVER card, and then look at their corporate headquarters in the giant building in Chicago. Goliath today is a financial system that is best represented by DISCOVER.

Gematria

If we calculate the gematria of the entire verse ([Rev. 13:18](#)), which speaks of the number 666, the numeric value adds up to 666 x 15. Hence, built into the text itself is this mysterious number, and the odds of this happening are only one in 666. Furthermore, verse 17 as a whole also carries a numeric value of 666 x 16. The odds of two verses in a row each being multiples of 666, can be calculated as one in 443,556 (i.e., 666 x 666). The odds increase greatly if we were to take into account that both of these verses speak of this very topic.

In [Rev. 18:5](#), the phrase, “*for her sins have piled up as high as heaven*,” carries a numeric value of 666 x 6. The phrase in [Rev. 14:11](#), “*those who worship the beast and his image*,” carries a numeric value of 666 x 6. Likewise, the phrase, “*merchants of the earth*,” in [Rev. 18:3](#), also carries a numeric value of precisely 666. This is supported by the Hebrew word *yitron*, “profit” ([Eccl. 1:3](#)) and the Greek word *euoporia*, “wealth” ([Acts 19:25](#)), which have a gematria of 666.

The rulers of Babylon are again described, along with their fate, in [Rev. 11:18](#), “*and to destroy those who destroy the earth.*” This phrase carries a numeric value of 666 x 5.

Even the overall divine objective, which is to create a new heaven and a new earth ([Rev. 21:1](#)), is marked by the number 666. It reads,

¹ And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there was no longer any sea.

Because much of the focus is upon the world system that is passing away, the verse as a whole carries a numeric value of 666 x 11. The corrupted earth itself is linked to both 11 and 666. The Greek word for “*earth*” carries a numeric value of 11, and the “*earth below*” (used in [Acts 2:19](#)) carries a numeric value of 666 x 2.

Antichrist

Although the word “antichrist” never appears in the book of Revelation—and is, indeed, a word that only John himself uses in his other writings—theologians and Bible teachers have tended to identify the various “beasts” with antichrist. Certainly, there is a connection, but I do not believe that they are the same, nor are they synonymous.

The idea of a “beast” is seen most clearly in the book of Daniel, where the four empires that were to arise were described as beasts: lion, bear, leopard, and iron-toothed beast, along with an extension (“horn”) of the fourth beast. The Greek word translated “beast” is *therion*, a wild, dangerous, or venomous animal. Every wild beast needs a handler, and thus, every kingdom needs a king to guide it. If we think of the king as the antichrist and his kingdom as the wild beast, then we can see the connection between the two, as well as their distinction.

The word “antichrist” does not mean one who stands in *opposition* to Christ, but one who stands *in place of* Christ. The word is technically neutral, being neither good nor bad except by the way in which the man rules. In [Matt. 2:22](#) we read,

²² But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of [Greek: *anti*] his father Herod, he was afraid to go there ...

In other words, Archelaus was an anti-Herod, not because he opposed Herod, but because he ruled *in place of* Herod. He might rule in the same manner as his father, or he might oppose his father’s past policies and rule in a different manner. The word *anti* does not distinguish, but remains neutral in this regard.

So also is it with Christ and antichrist. John tells us that by his time there had been “*many antichrists*” ([1 John 2:18](#)). We could cite some of them from the Old Testament. Saul was an antichrist in that he ruled the throne of the Kingdom in his own way, treating the throne as if it were his own. Saul was an antichrist in a negative sense. However, King David ruled the throne as a steward of Christ, attempting to rule by the mind of Christ. He was an antichrist in a positive sense, ruling in place of Christ.

Even so, most examples in Scripture and in history are negative. Perhaps the most prominent antichrist was David’s son, Absalom, who usurped the throne of David for a season and became, as it were, an *anti-David*. His usurpation established the main prophetic pattern for the events in the New Testament a thousand years later. Absalom overthrew David with the support and help of Ahithophel, David’s friend and counselor ([2 Sam. 15:12](#)) in a conspiracy that arose out of the city of Hebron ([2 Sam. 15:10](#)). David left without fighting back, and made a sacrifice on the top of the Mount of Olives ([2 Sam. 15:32](#)).

A thousand years later, the chief priests, playing the role of Absalom, usurped the throne that rightfully belonged to Jesus Christ. He too made a sacrifice on the top of the Mount of Olives. He was betrayed by Judas Iscariot (*Ish-Kerioth*, a “man of Kerioth-arba,” the old name for Hebron), whom Jesus called “friend” ([Matt. 26:50](#)).

Absalom was the most prominent “antichrist” of the Old Testament, and the chief priests played his role in the New Testament. John saw the Jewish leaders as antichrists, who had usurped the throne of Christ, saying in [1 John 2:22, 23](#),

²² Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son. ²³ Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also.

The Jewish leaders had denied that Jesus is the Christ (or Messiah), thereby also denying the Father who had sent Him. John says that one cannot “*have the Father*” unless they also confess—or bear witness to—the Son. In other words, it is NOT the case that Judaism gives one the Father, while Christianity gives others the Son. It is all or nothing, and one cannot reject the Son without also rejecting the Father.

Those who support the Jewish leaders who have usurped the throne of Christ are comparable to the Israelites who supported Absalom when he opposed David. Further, those Christians who consider the Jews to be chosen and support the Jewish leadership are in danger of following the pattern of Ahithophel, who betrayed David, and of Judas, who betrayed Jesus. The irony of betrayal is that it is done by “friends,” not by enemies as such.

The ultimate irony in our time is that the Rothschild family, representing the earth beast, has used its wealth and influence to promote “Zionism” to establish the Israeli state, and that this has been supported by much of the Christian world.

We need to learn what it means to “*confess the Son*.” It is to support Jesus Christ’s right to rule in His throne, but this cannot be done while supporting usurpers (Absalom). A clear distinction must be made between the two competing kings.

The Rothschild King of the Jews

In the 1800’s this family became so powerful that they soon began to call their chairman the King of the Jews, and often referred to their family as “our royal family.” Their official biography, written by Niall Ferguson and published in 1998, says on page 8:

“In this sense, phrases like ‘Kings of the Jews’ which contemporaries applied to them contained an important element of truth. That was exactly the way the Rothschilds saw and conducted themselves—as phrases like ‘our royal family’ in their letters show—and the way they were treated by many other less wealthy Jews.”

On page 21, Niall Ferguson writes about Nathan Rothschild, the son of Mayer Amschel, who became the chairman of the family trust:

“His wealth was in fact intended for a higher purpose: ‘to avenge the wrongs of Israel’ by securing ‘the re-establishment of Judah’s kingdom—the rebuilding of thy towers, Oh! Jerusalem!’ and ‘the restoration of Judea to our ancient race’.”

Nathan Rothschild died in 1836, more than a century before the family goal was accomplished. The Israeli state was formed in 1948, primarily due to their money and influence. Of course, we acknowledge the sovereignty of God in this as well, for the fig tree had to bring forth more leaves (without fruit) in order to fulfill Jesus’ prophecy in [Matt. 24:32](#). Even so, this historic event did not just happen by itself.

The *Niles Weekly Register* reported as early as 1835–1836 (proudly quoted in Ferguson’s book, p. 257):

“The Rothschilds are the wonders of modern banking ... We see the descendants of Judah, after a persecution of two thousand years, peering above kings, rising higher than emperors, and holding a whole continent in the hollow of their hands. The Rothschilds govern a Christian world. Not a cabinet moves without their advice.

They stretch their hand, with equal ease, from Petersburg to Vienna, from Vienna to Paris, from Paris to London, from London to Washington. Baron Rothschild, the head of the house, is the true king of Judah, the prince of the captivity, the Messiah so long looked for by this extraordinary people. He holds the keys of peace or war, blessing or cursing ... They are the brokers and counsellors of the kings of Europe and of the republican chiefs of America. What more can they desire?"

It is the belief in upper Jewish circles that in order to qualify as their messiah, a man must first be able to prove some descent from Judah and David, and secondly, he must help establish the Jewish state. So they believe that one of the Rothschild descendants will be the Jewish messiah.

This is what Christians today have been supporting, not quite understanding that they have been manipulated behind the scenes by powerful men with intentions that are anything but Christian.

Once we understand the historical connection between modern banking, its money and the mark of the beast, we can see how the “image” has usurped the place of the real and is in direct violation of the Second Commandment that bans graven images. The mark of the beast is the brand of a slave owner upon his slave. The mark (or seal) of God is the brand (or signature) of God upon His bond servants. Paul says in [Rom. 8:2](#),

² For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.

In other words, we have been set free from the beastly slave master who commands us to sin. John says that “*sin is lawlessness*,” that is, *anomia* ([1 John 3:4](#)). We were set free, as [Rom. 7:22](#) says, and now “*I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man*,” because we agree with His righteous commands and expectations, even though we find it impossible to perform while in this flesh. It is far better to fail in a righteous command than to succeed in fulfilling the law of sin that is commanded by the beast nature and his system of government.

The image of God is Jesus Christ Himself ([Heb. 1:3, KJV](#)). The image of the beast is a false Christ, an antichrist, that which usurps the place—and the number—of Jesus Christ, as we will see shortly. Even as “breath” or Spirit was given to Jesus when He was raised from the dead, so also is “breath” given to the image of the beast in [Rev. 13:15](#).

The Counterfeit Lamb

Recall that [Rev. 13:11](#) says,

¹¹ And I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spoke as a dragon.

This beast is a dragon in lamb’s clothing, as it were. It pretends to be a lamb, but its true identity is revealed by his voice and the lawless nature of his commands. This has more than one layer of meaning, but on one level we may apply it to the Rothschilds and extend it to their associates of the banking families, most of which were Jewish, as we have already seen. They pretend to be Israelites, or “sheep” in biblical metaphoric language, but in fact their lawlessness reveals their true identity.

The number 666 actually depicts the perfection (3) of man (6). It is not a bad number in itself, but instead has been usurped by evil men, or antichrists.

Let us take a closer look at [Rev. 13:17](#) and [18](#),

¹⁷ and he provides that no one should be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark, either the name of the beast or the number of his name.¹⁸ Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for the number is that of a man; and his number is six hundred and sixty-six.

The beast's number is 666, but that does not mean that he has obtained it legitimately or that it truly belongs to him. What if he has usurped this number and is using it unlawfully? What if this number actually belongs to Jesus Christ?

This may seem like a strange view, until we see that the phrase "*and his number is six hundred and sixty-six*" carries a numeric value of 2368. The number 2368 is the numeric value of *Jesus Christ* in Greek. Jesus is 888, and Christ is 1480. Adding them together comes to 2368. Built into the actual Greek text is a number which reveals the one whose number is 666. It does not belong to the beast, but to Jesus Christ, for He alone is the perfect man represented by three sixes.

Furthermore, the three Greek letters making up the number 666 are: *chi*, 600, which is short for Christos); *xi*, 60, which is a cross; and *stigma*, 6, which means "pierced." Does not this describe the cross on which Christ was to be pierced?

Therefore, I believe we might paraphrase verse 18 above to read: "Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, *which he usurped*; for the number is that of a *particular* man, *Jesus Christ*; and His number is six hundred and sixty-six."

The Head (Stone) of the Corner

[Psalm 118:22](#), [23](#) prophesies of Jesus Christ, saying,

²² **The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief corner stone** ["head stone of the corner," KJV]. ²³ **This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.**

Most Christians recognize this as a messianic prophecy, because Jesus quoted it in [Matt. 21:42](#) and applied it to Himself. What most do not realize, however, is that the phrase "*the chief corner stone*" carries a numeric value of 666. So who is the chief corner stone? Is it Christ or antichrist?

Obviously, when we understand the big picture in the divine plan, we know that Christ and antichrist are competing for the throne and the Dominion Mandate to rule the earth. But in the end, Jesus Christ is the Perfect Man for the job, while all antichrists are mere usurpers and are just as disqualified to rule the Kingdom as was Absalom.

This "*chief corner stone*" is the same foundation of the New Temple described in [Eph. 2:20–22](#). But in [Psalm 118:22](#) it actually refers to the capstone of the Great Pyramid in Egypt, which is mentioned in [Isaiah 19:19](#), [20](#),

¹⁹ **In that day there will be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar to the Lord near its border.** ²⁰ **And it will become a sign and a witness to the Lord of hosts in the land of Egypt; for they will cry to the Lord because of oppressors, and He will send them a Savior and a Champion, and He will deliver them.**

The Great Pyramid stands as a witness to God on the border between Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt (Nile delta), precisely where Isaiah locates it. The numeric value of these two verses describing the Great Pyramid are exactly 5449, which is the precise height of the Great Pyramid in its internal unit of measure, Pyramid Inches.

The Pyramid is left unfinished, because its capstone was never placed on its summit. If the builders had placed the Capstone, its height would have been 5776 Pyramid Inches, which happens to be the date of 2016 on the Jewish calendar. Perhaps the year 2016 will prove to be an important year in some way.

The Stoning of Babylon

Stoning was a common form of execution in the law. Paul tells us in [Rom. 7:14](#) that "*the law is spiritual*," and as such it is also prophetic. Hence, the divine judgment upon Babylon is revealed in terms of stoning. The stone of David strikes Goliath on the forehead ([1 Sam. 17:49](#)). The stone cut out of the mountain without (human) hands strikes the image on its feet and grinds it to powder ([Dan. 2:34](#), [35](#)). God stones Babylon with "*huge hailstones*" in [Rev. 16:21](#).

All of these examples portray stoning as the divine judgment upon the idolatrous systems of men. Of course, this judgment is designed to set their slaves free, first by offering them citizenship in the Kingdom of God, and finally into the glorious freedom of the children of God with “*the redemption of our body*” ([Rom. 8:21, 23](#)). No one who is enslaved to this beast system ought to be afraid of God’s judgment upon their slave master.

The End of Beast Dominion

The time of the two beasts has now run its course. As allies, their time was 1,480 years from 534–2014 A.D., beginning when Justinian changed times and law ([Dan. 7:25](#)). Being the last entities on the list of beasts that were to receive the Dominion Mandate, we should expect to see their time run out at the close of the “seven times” given to them by divine contract. The contract is expiring from 2014–2017, as I have explained earlier.

The number 1480 is the numeric value of “Christ” in Greek. So we find that Jesus was crucified on the 1480th Passover from Israel’s first feast in the land of Egypt. This time cycle coincided with the end of Daniel’s 70 weeks (490 years), the only time when the true Christ could have been crucified. Hence, we look in vain for any other man fulfilling even one of the prophecies of Christ at this appointed time.

The second 1480-year cycle was the time of the little horn. That time is now coming to a close over a period of 3 or 3½ years from 2014–2018. It appears that we are approaching another climax of history, which will be revealed in due time. Will [Dan. 9:24–27](#) have a secondary (and perhaps a greater) fulfillment in the second work of Christ?

Chapter 8: The 144,000

Revelation 13 gave us a broad sketch of prophetic history. The first beast covered 42 prophetic months (1,260 years), primarily from 529–1789 A.D. The second beast overthrew the first beast, but then used it as a religious front in order to hide its true power and influence in the background. This beast has also used many other organizations (such as Freemasonry) as fronts to hide its intentions. While the first beast is primarily the religious beast of Rome, the second beast is the secular beast primarily led by high-level banking families, visibly led by the Rothschilds.

Since the earth beast is the last power to rule the earth prior to the time when the saints are given the Dominion Mandate, Revelation 13 takes us to the present time and to the manifestation of the overcomers. It is this event that will fully destroy the Babylonian world system.

Revelation 13 brings us to the end of the beast systems insofar as prophetic history is concerned. After this, in Revelation 14–19, John speaks primarily of the overthrow of the beast systems and their spiritual city, “Babylon,” along with the rise of the overcomers. So this marks the end of the main historical section of the book of Revelation.

Who are the 144,000?

The overcomers are called to bring a world-wide teaching that will spark a tremendous move of the Holy Spirit among the nations. It will be a grass-roots movement and will begin from the bottom, working its way up. It will not begin as a conversion of world leaders, where those leaders then force Christ upon those under their authority.

[Revelation 14:1](#) begins with a vision of the overcomers:

¹ And I looked, and behold, the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads.

These are the overcomers, not the Church in general. In fact, keeping in mind that John wrote this without separating his book into chapters, we can see that “*the Lamb*” in [Rev. 14:1](#) stands in contrast to the earth beast which has “*two horns like a lamb*” ([Rev. 13:11](#)). The true Lamb (*arnion*) replacing the counterfeit is not only Jesus Christ (the Head) but also includes His body of overcomers.

As for which tribe of Israel each person is, there is hardly a way today that anyone can tell by natural means. Revelation 7 tells us that there are 12,000 from each tribe. It is often assumed that the only way to be a member of a tribe of Israel is to be a genealogical descendant of one of the 12 patriarchs of Israel. However, this is not the case, because when God cast Israel out of the land in 721 B.C., He stripped them of the right to the name *Israel*, because the people did not live up to that name. To be an Israelite requires faith.

God divorced the House of Israel and sent her out of the house, according to the law in [Deut. 24:1–5](#). The only way for any ex-Israelite to be remarried and to regain “chosen” status is through the New Covenant. Even this is a two-step process, first through Judah and then through Israel.

Paul tells us in [Rom. 2:28, 29](#) that “*he is not a Jew who is one outwardly,*” and, conversely, “*he is a Jew who is one inwardly.*” Paul was speaking legally, not genealogically. It may also be said that Paul was speaking spiritually, because “*the law is spiritual*” ([Rom. 7:14](#)). That which is truly spiritual is not distinct from the law, but in fact is bound to the law. In the sight of God there is no such thing as lawless spirituality. It is only when men misunderstand the law that their practice becomes *legalistic*. True spirituality is *lawful*.

The law always trumps genealogy. There were genuine tribal members of the House of Israel who could be expelled from Israel if they committed certain sins and remained unrepentant. The law says such a man was to be “*cut off from among his people*” ([Lev. 17:4](#)). On the other hand, foreigners always had the option of coming under Israel’s covenant and becoming citizens of Israel ([Isaiah 56:6–8](#)).

Step One is to become a “Jew,” that is, a part of Judah, by faith in its true King and by declaring loyalty to Him alone. The ceremony of Baptism essentially is the oath of citizenship. Their vow expresses faith and loyalty, giving them citizenship in the tribe of Judah. Those who do this are generally known as “the church.”

Step Two is to become an Israelite, and this title is given to those who carry its testimony. *Israel* means “God rules.” In *The Companion Bible* Dr. Bullinger tells us in his notes for [Gen. 32:28](#),

“Israel—‘God commands, orders, or rules.’ Man attempts it but always, in the end, fails. Out of some forty Hebrew names compounded with ‘El’ or ‘Jah’, God is always the doer of what the verb means (cp. Dani-el, God judges).

Jacob did not become an Israelite until he was about 98 years old. Up to that time, he had certainly been a believer in the God of his fathers, but he still did not understand the sovereignty of God. For this reason, he attempted to help God fulfill the prophecy given before he was born ([Gen. 25:23](#)) by deceiving his father ([Gen. 27:19, 24](#)). By his wits Jacob overcame his father, his brother, and his uncle Laban. Then he wrestled with an angel, and when he lost the match, he overcame. He won by losing, or rather, he won by coming to the realization that in all of his striving up to that point, he had been fighting God without knowing it. He finally realized that God did not need his carnal help to fulfill His promises. That is true faith, and it is what made him an overcomer.

Jacob, then, was a type of the church; Israel was a type of overcomer. Not all Jacobites are Israelites. Most Christians have insufficient faith to be an overcomer, and for this reason they still strive, not knowing how to enter God’s rest ([Heb. 4:9–11](#)). There are also other characteristics of an overcomer, which I discussed in my book, [How to be an Overcomer](#).

We conclude, then, that the 144,000 overcomers are not exclusively genealogical Israelites, but include people of every nation that qualify as overcomers. It is certainly NOT the case that these are 144,000 people whom men today call “Jews.” The popular idea is absurd that “gentiles” will be raptured out of the earth, leaving 144,000 Jewish evangelists to preach the Gospel to those who (they say) cannot be converted anyway because the Holy Spirit has been removed from the earth.

No, this chapter on the 144,000 comes naturally at the close of the earth beast’s dominion. We know from [Dan. 7:21, 22](#) that the little horn “*was waging war with the saints and overpowering them until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was passed in favor of the saints of the Highest One, and the time arrived when the saints took possession of the kingdom.*” These saints who are given the Dominion Mandate are the 144,000 in Revelation 14, who arise after the end of the time of the little horn in Revelation 13.

His Name on Their Foreheads

[Rev. 14:1](#) tells us that the overcomers have “*His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads.*” God has put His name in many places throughout history. We see His name first on the tabernacle at the Ephraimite town of *Shiloh* ([Josh. 18:1](#)) Later, because of corruption, God removed His name from that place and moved it to Solomon’s Temple in *Jerusalem* ([Psalm 78:60–68](#)).

A few centuries later, God removed His name from Jerusalem, like He had done earlier with Shiloh ([Jer. 7:12–15; 26:6](#); Ezekiel 10, 11). God then hired the king of Babylon to destroy that temple. Seventy years later, when the second temple was built in the days of Ezra and Zerubbabel, the glory did not fill that temple. God did not place His name there, *nor could He*, because He had forsaken that place “*like Shiloh.*” He never returned to Shiloh, but pronounced “Ichabod” over it, for the glory had departed.

He did not glorify the second temple, because He was waiting for a better temple made of living stones. He filled this new temple on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2. From that time on, His name was written on our foreheads, not upon any external temple made of wood and stone. [Rev. 3:12](#) says,

¹² He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it any more; and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name.

God no longer writes His name upon houses made of wood and stone. He has finally purchased His dream house—the overcomers—for He has always longed to indwell human flesh and to glorify Himself in us. So [Rev. 22:4](#) says,

⁴ and they shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads.

This is not a temporary situation. This will not end with the building of a third (physical) temple in Jerusalem. Christ does not intend to vacate His dream house and go back to a mundane building at the place that was defiled in the days of Jeremiah. Men may build a structure there, but no one can force God to live there. He will do as He has said in His word.

The 144,000 Harpers

[Revelation 14:2](#), [3](#) says,

² And I heard a voice from heaven, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder, and the voice which I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps. ³ And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no one could learn the song except the one hundred and forty-four thousand who had been purchased from the earth.

This description of the overcomers is quite different from the one back in Revelation 7, which described them in military terms. There the 144,000 were “sealed” in their foreheads. In ancient times a general would review the troops after a battle and place a mark on the forehead of each one who came through the battle unscathed. It signified that this one was divinely protected.

But here in Revelation 14 we see a different picture of the overcomers. They are pictured as musicians playing harps and singing “*a new song*.” Are these the same overcomers as the ones in [Rev. 7](#)? Yes, but ...

The best way to understand the New Testament is to understand the Old Testament. They confirm each other and explain each other. In most cases, the Old Testament has dark sayings that are written as types and shadows, and they need a New Testament understanding. But sometimes the New Testament is unclear without knowing the types and shadows of the Old Testament.

In this case, the book of Revelation is portraying aspects of the emerging Kingdom of God in the earth. In the Old Testament this is pictured in the kingdom of David, especially as we contrast it with the Kingdom of Saul. In David’s kingdom we find that he had both an army and a choir, and these were types and shadows of the overcomers pictured in Revelation 7 and 14. In [1 Chron. 27:1](#) we read,

¹ Now this is the enumeration of the sons of Israel, the heads of fathers’ households, the commanders of thousands and of hundreds, and their officers who served the king in all the affairs of the divisions which came in and went out month by month throughout all the months of the year, each division numbering 24,000.

The rest of the chapter explains how each tribe was responsible for one month out of the year to supply 24,000 men for military service. The troops rotated every month for 12 months. This means that David had an army of 288,000 men. (24,000 x 12 = 288,000)

Strangely enough, this is double 144,000. But this coincidence is still more striking when we read about David’s choir in [1 Chron. 25:7](#),

⁷ And their number who were trained in singing to the Lord, with their relatives, all who were skillful, was 288.

So David had a choir of 288, and a military of 288,000. Can this be just a coincidence? Why is the number doubled from 144 and 144,000? I believe that it indicates *two groups* of overcomers, each with 144,000 in them. I realize that the number may simply be purely symbolic, rather than literal. But since these are the numbers given to us, we will speak as though these are literal numbers of people.

The Meaning of 288

The number 288 is associated in the Bible with the overcomers in various ways. In [Lev. 19:20](#), the Hebrew word *charaph* (“betrothed”) has a numeric value of 288. This suggests that the number has to do with those called to be the bride of Christ.

In [Gen. 1:2](#) the Spirit of God “moved” (*rachaph*) upon the face of the waters. *Rachaph* has a numeric value of 288. This word is of interest because it has to do with the action of the Holy Spirit over creation. The same word is used in [Deut. 32:11](#), where God is pictured as an eagle, “*As an eagle stirreth up [rachaph] her nest.*”

In the New Testament, we have these examples:

1. [2 Timothy 1:9](#), “a holy calling” = 288.
2. [Matthew 25:21](#), “the joy of the Lord” = 2880.
3. [Revelation 21:9](#), “the Bride, the Lamb’s wife” = 2880.

In addition to these, [Gen. 24:22](#) speaks of the two bracelets that Eleazar gave to Rebekah when he went to find a bride for Isaac. The Hebrew word for “bracelet” is *tsamid*, which has a numeric value of 144. He gave her TWO bracelets, which suggests the number 144 x 2, or 288.

Rebekah is a type and shadow of “*the Bride, the Lamb’s wife*,” even as Isaac, who was placed on the altar of sacrifice on Mount Moriah, represents Christ. Abraham sent Eleazar to find a bride for Isaac. Eleazar means “God helps,” and speaks of the Holy Spirit, who is our Helper, the Advocate, or “Comforter” ([John 14:16](#)).

In fact, Eleazar is the Hebrew form of the Greek name *Lazarus* (John 11). Lazarus, the resurrected one, has a numeric value of 144.

There are many interesting things that can be seen in biblical mathematics, which help us to understand the meaning of the text itself. The number 288 is associated with the action of the Holy Spirit that prepares the Bride for her holy calling as the Lamb’s wife.

But also, the prominence of the number 288 in David’s kingdom as well as in biblical mathematics shows us that there are two groups of 144,000 for a total of 288,000. Whether the number is to be understood literally or to be viewed as purely symbolic, we should understand that there are *two manifestations* of overcomers.

The Male and Female Theme

As we noted earlier in our study of Revelation 7, the first group of 144,000 were associated with the military and with the seal of God on their foreheads. In those days women did not enter military service, and so this was a “male” theme. But in Revelation 14, we see that the overcomers are portrayed in “female” terms. Verse 4 says (KJV),

⁴ These are they which were not defiled with [meta, “among, or amidst”] women, for they are virgins

Take note that this verse does NOT tell us that these are men who have not been defiled BY women. There have been some small sects in the past who used this verse to teach against marriage, as if to say that if you want to be an overcomer, you cannot marry. Their teaching was based largely upon a misunderstanding of the Greek word, *meta*, used in [Rev. 14:4](#). Those sects, of course, died out within a generation.

Women are not defiling to men. God sanctified marriage at the beginning, and there is nothing wrong with having sexual relations within the bonds of lawful marriage. Meta does not mean “with” in the sense of “by,” as if women *cause* defilement. Rather “with” is in the sense of “among or amidst.” Hence, these “virgins” are women.

For example, [Matt. 1:23](#) says, “God with us,” that is, among us or in our midst—or even IN us. It does not mean God BY us in any *causal* sense. In [Matt. 2:3](#), Herod “was troubled, and all Jerusalem with [*meta*] him.” It does not mean to say Jerusalem was troubled BY Herod, but rather, along with Him. If we remove the words added to the text by the translators, a more literal rendering of [Rev. 14:3, 4](#) is:

³ ... no one was able to learn the song except the 144,000—those having been bought from the earth, those among women not defiled; for they are virgins.

I obtained this data from Wilson’s The Emphatic Diaglott, which is a good literal translation of the New Testament. So if I may paraphrase this, it says that these are the ones redeemed, or bought from the earth among women who have not been defiled, for they are virgins. In the Bible, the term “virgin” is never applied to men. It is the virgin *women* who are undefiled in this verse.

It is unfortunate that men have translated this verse to make it say that men are defiled by marrying women. Scripture does not say this.

The overcomers are portrayed here as virgin women. The rest of verse 4 says,

⁴ These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These have been purchased from among men as first fruits to God and to the Lamb.

The idea of “following the Lamb” indicates a female theme as well, since in those days it was customary for the women to follow behind their husband as they walked, even as disciples followed their master while traveling. In this case, we are all part of the Bride of Christ, whether we are men or women in the natural. And as overcomers, we “*follow the Lamb wherever He goes.*”

It seems to me that if the number 144,000 were to be taken as a literal number, then this would suggest that there will be 144,000 men and 144,000 women who are overcomers, for a total of 288,000.

If the number is not literal, then at the very least it shows that both men and women are overcomers, and that we all have both spiritual roles to play in different ways. It may even suggest an equal number of men and women who are overcomers. Whether we are men or women, we are all part of the Bride of Christ in that we are called to bring the Manchild to birth. Yet we are also called to rule with Christ in His throne as part of His Body. In that role, we are all male, whether we are men or women physically.

Hence, relative to Christ (the Head), we are female, because we follow His lead. But relative to the rest of creation, we are male, because the overcomers are their leaders, called to rule the Kingdom. In regard to spiritual matters, Paul says in [Gal. 3:28](#) that we are neither male nor female. We transcend gender in the spirit, because, actually, *we are both*.

Jesus Christ in the Prophetic Law

The law prophesies of Christ. Nowhere is this more evident than in the laws of sacrifice. Jesus came to die on the cross as the final Sacrifice prophesied by all of the previous sacrifices. The law tells us that sacrifices on behalf of the

congregation (the bride of Christ) were to be made with a female goat, while sacrifices done on behalf of the leaders were to be made with a male goat.

Of leaders, [Lev. 4:22–24](#) says,

²² When a leader sins... ²³ ... he shall bring for his offering a goat, a male without defect.

Of the congregation, [Lev. 4:27](#), [28](#) says,

²⁷ Now if anyone of the common people sins... ²⁸ ... he shall bring for his offering a goat, a female without defect.

Jesus fulfilled all of the sacrifices, both male and female. Jesus Himself came as a male, of course, and let no man accuse Him of being transgender. Paul says “*the law is spiritual*,” and that there is no gender as such in the spiritual realm. As the sacrifice for sin, Jesus fulfilled in one act all of the types and shadows set forth in the law, because He was to be the sacrifice for the congregation and the leaders alike.

The Passover lamb was to be “*an unblemished male*” ([Exodus 12:5](#)), and this festival set the appointed time for Christ to die on the cross. However, the location of the cross on the Mount of Olives, was set by the law of the red heifer—a *female* burnt offering ([Num. 19:2](#)). So Jesus was crucified “*outside the camp*” ([Num. 19:3](#); [Heb. 13:11–13](#)) at the place where the ashes of the red heifer were kept.

Hence, the law made provision for both male and female, each having an important purpose, role, and revelation. When this is applied to the two groups of 144,000, we see that Revelation 7 describes the overcomers in male (i.e., military) terms, whereas Revelation 14 describes the overcomers in female terms as they sing the new song and follow the Lamb.

This indicates first that both men and women can be and will be overcomers. Secondly, it shows that all overcomers play a dual role in spiritual matters, even as Jesus did in fulfilling the laws regarding male and female sacrifice. Thirdly, if these numbers should prove to be not only symbolic but also literal, it would suggest 144,000 men and 144,000 women who are overcomers.

The New Song

[Revelation 14:3](#) says,

³ And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no one could learn the song except the one hundred and forty-four thousand who had been purchased from the earth.

Only the overcomers “*could learn the song*.” The song is a revelation—perhaps a specific truth or set of truths that are ingrained within the hearts of the overcomers. If these were mere words of a song, then most people would be able to learn the song. But it is obviously not so simple as that. This is no mere performance. It is the song of one’s life, one’s heart, one’s experience with God. Even as the prophetic word is an expression of the heart of God and reveals who He is, so also is this new prophetic song an expression of the heart of the overcomers.

The metaphor itself portrayed the practice of having singers in the temple, Levites trained in music, who sang various psalms on appropriate occasions. As we said earlier, David had 288 musicians in his temple choir. After Solomon built the temple, these musicians sang on the steps of the temple “*before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders*” ([Rev. 14:3](#)).

In [Rev. 15:3, 4](#) we are told that “*they sang the song of Moses the bondservant of God and the song of the Lamb.*” The theme of this song (or songs) has to do with the works of God and the ultimate response from all nations. “*All the nations will come and worship before Thee.*” This is a reference to the great scene in [Rev. 5:13](#),

¹³ And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, “To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever.”

Hence, the song is about universal reconciliation, where all nations worship God as a response to His “*great and marvelous*” works and His “*righteous acts.*” In other words, this song is bound up in the New Covenant, which is God’s oath to save all nations, all mankind, and all of creation. This great oath is seen clearly in many places, including the second covenant in [Deut. 29:10–15](#). Here God told all the people to gather together, men, women, children, aliens, in order that they might enter “*His oath which the Lord your God is making with you today.*”

[Deut. 29:14, 15](#) says that this oath was not limited to those present, but included all “*those who are not with us here today.*” Thus, the psalms later foretold the gathering of all nations to worship Christ, and the New Testament says that Christ has reconciled all of creation to Himself ([Heb. 2:8](#)). These are the righteous acts of God in fulfillment of His oath to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob ([Deut. 29:13](#)), and this is the main thrust of the “new song.”

First Fruits to God

[Rev. 14:4](#) also says that these overcomers are “*first fruits to God and to the Lamb.*” The law of first fruits says that the harvest cannot begin until the first fruits have been given to God ([Lev. 23:14](#)). Likewise, the first fruits sanctify the harvest, “*for if the first fruit be holy, the lump is also holy*” ([Rom. 11:16](#)).

The overcomers are first fruits, a cross section of the harvest. During inspection, if the first fruits are found worthy (ripe), the whole harvest is sanctified. In other words, when the overcomers are presented to God and pronounced “holy,” it matters not how unholy the rest of the world is at the time, because the holiness of the first fruits sanctify the entire harvest according to the law.

The Gospel of Truth

We will see later that after the overcomers are manifested, the angels go forth with the gospel to all the nations. [Rev. 14:5](#) continues,

⁵ And no lie was found in their mouth; they are blameless.

This means that an overcomer is honest. He does not have delusions of grandeur, but fulfills the word in [Rom. 12:3](#),

³ For through the grace given to me I say to every man among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.

Conversely, an overcomer does not underestimate himself, but is bold in the knowledge of his or her position in Christ. In fact, Paul’s exhortation in Romans 12 (above) is his introduction to a discussion about the use of one’s spiritual gifts and callings.

To fulfill one’s calling requires a realistic view of one’s self, seeing himself as God sees him. It does not mean that he or she now knows the complete truth or believes only correct doctrine—except, no doubt, after the glorification of the body has taken place. But an overcomer is contrasted to “*all liars*” ([Rev. 21:8](#)) who will be judged in the “lake of fire” to purify their hearts of all lies.

In [Rev. 22:15](#) we read that outside the New Jerusalem is “*everyone who loves and practices lying.*” Such lying is deliberate to the point where it is done unconsciously, and the person has come to believe his own lies.

Chapter 9: The Angel of Hastening Hope

The overcomers in [Rev. 14:1–5](#) are the saints of the Most High who are to be given the dominion when the time of the little horn ends, as [Dan. 7:21, 22](#) tells us. In the Concordant Version of [Dan. 7:18](#), we read that their responsibility is to “*safeguard the Kingdom*.” The transfer of authority is only the beginning of their thousand-year rest-work. As with Joshua, whose commission in [Deut. 31:23](#) gave him the legal authority to invade Canaan, so also is it with the overcomers in their conquest to bring the whole earth under the feet of Christ.

The main difference between Joshua’s conquest of Canaan and the overcomers’ conquest of the earth is that these conquests are done under two very different covenants. The first was done under the Old Covenant by physical swords and war, while the second is done by the sword of the Spirit and by spiritual warfare.

On the day that Moses commissioned Joshua, he wrote a song ([Deut. 31:22](#)) and then sang it to the people in [Deut. 32:1–43](#). This is the Song of Moses mentioned in [Rev. 15:3](#). The song was about God’s faithfulness, but also about Israel’s corruption and foolishness. The overcomers are given “*a new song*” to sing, based on the New Covenant and setting forth God’s promise of deliverance by the power of His word and oath.

This New Covenant song of the Lamb sends a message to the nations. [Rev. 14:6, 7](#) says,

⁶ And I saw another angel flying in midheaven, having an eternal gospel to preach to those who live on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people; ⁷ and he said with a loud voice, Fear God and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters.

The message is the “eternal gospel,” or literally, “*glad tidings age-lasting*” (The Emphatic Diaglott). The word *gospel* means good news or “glad tidings.” The word *aionian*, here translated “age-lasting,” indicates that it is the gospel pertaining to The Age that follows. It should be understood to mean the Gospel (or Glad Tidings) of the Kingdom, which arrives after the long domination of beast nations. The message is twofold:

1. Fear God and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come.
2. Worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters.

The Judgment of God

The judgment in this case is not the Great White Throne which is seen at the end of the thousand years in [Rev. 20:5, 11](#). It is the judgment wherein the Ancient of Days gives the Kingdom to the saints. The Concordant Version uses the term *Transferrer of Days*, rather than Ancient of Days. This agrees with Gesenius Lexicon, which says that the Hebrew word *attiyk* (“Ancient” or “Transferrer”) comes from the root word *athak*, “*to move, proceed, advance, move on, become, be removed, transferred*.”

Gesenius also tells us that the word includes the idea of *advancing in years* and even means “to wean” a baby ([Isaiah 28:9](#)) in the sense of advancing or transferring the child from the breast to solid food.

Hence, the “Ancient of Days” has a double meaning. It refers to One who is old or ancient (having white hair), but His purpose is to transfer the Dominion Mandate from the beasts to the saints of the Most High. For further study, see my book, [Daniel, Prophet of the Ages, Book 2, chapter 4](#).

To some, it may seem strange that this angel would proclaim the *good news of divine judgment*, because most people associate God’s judgment with the bad news of eternal torment. But this passage provides us with no such picture. The judgment is the divine decree that rules against the beast and for the saints of the Most High. John gives few details, but [Dan. 7:11](#) tells us,

¹¹ Then I kept looking because of the sound of the boastful words which the horn was speaking; I kept looking until the beast was slain, and its body was destroyed and given to the burning fire.

The “burning fire” is that which comes out from the throne itself, for the prophet tells us that “*His throne was ablaze with flames, its wheels were a burning fire. A river of fire was flowing and coming out from before Him*” ([Dan. 7:9, 10](#)). A throne is a symbol of law, by which a monarch judges the people according to the “fiery law” ([Deut. 33:2, KJV](#)). Hence, any decree that the Judge issues is pictured metaphorically as a fire coming from the throne.

The purpose of this judgment is not to destroy the earth but to save it. The destruction of the beast puts an end to the oppression of his system. It dethrones the rulers of the present world order who misuse God’s creation and enslave the people perpetually. This judgment sets men free under the rulership of the overcomers, whose character is consistent with that of Jesus Christ and who rule with love.

This is the proclamation of the *Angel of Hastening Hope* (my personal revelation), who is sent out to inform the world of this decree from the throne. The result is seen in [Isaiah 26:9](#),

⁹ for when the earth experiences Thy judgments, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.

Worship God

The second message which John attributes to this angel is the decree to worship the Creator. He is identified as the one who created all things in order to set forth His right to rule that which He has created. In other words, He invokes the Law of Ownership, or of Creator’s Rights.

This angel’s message is primarily from Psalm 67, which is a Tabernacles psalm celebrating the time when the earth is set free from its taskmasters in order to serve the Creator who loves them. The psalmist longs for the *transfiguration*, as pictured by Moses when his face shined forth in light ([Exodus 34:30–35](#)). Psalm 67 says,

¹ God be gracious unto us and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us—Selah— ² That Thy way may be known on the earth, Thy salvation among all nations.

This light does not shine out of heaven like a spotlight in a stage performance. It is a light that shines out of us, as with Moses in [Exodus 34:35](#), “*the skin of Moses’ face shone*.” This is a promise and a prophecy of transfiguration, and it is the result of God’s blessing and grace. The purpose of this transfiguration is “*that Thy way may be known on the earth*” and “*Thy salvation (Yeshua) among all nations*.” The psalmist continues,

³ Let the peoples praise Thee, O God; let all the peoples praise Thee. ⁴ Let the nations be glad and sing for joy; for Thou wilt judge the peoples with uprightness, and guide the nations on the earth.

The psalmist prophesies here that God’s judgments in the earth will make the nations “*sing for joy*.” The day will come when the earth’s tyrants will no longer be able to rule with injustice and unrighteousness. The rule of Jesus Christ (with the overcomers) at the manifestation of His Kingdom will make the nations glad.

This is the gospel, the “good news” of the Kingdom that this angel proclaims in the heavens and which the overcomers proclaim on the earth. And this is the reason why all men ought to worship Him. They should worship Him out of *love*, not because they are forced to do so against their will by threats of death or torture. The psalmist ends with the climax in [Psalm 67:7](#),

⁷ God blesses us, that all the ends of the earth may fear Him.

The blessing of transfiguration into the full image of Christ is not merely to bless the overcomers, but to extend that blessing to all the families of the earth. The Abrahamic calling was given to stewards who would dispense God’s blessing to all nations and not hoard them for themselves or for the few.

This is the angelic message in [Rev. 14:7](#). It is the gospel of the Kingdom that must be preached to all nations before the end arrives. In [Matt. 24:14](#) Jesus says,

¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to the nations; and then the end shall come.

I have heard many sermons in the past, telling us that only a few will believe this message. They emphasize “*for a witness*,” explaining that Jesus says nothing about those nations actually believing the gospel that is preached. So far, this explanation seems to have validity, because few have believed this gospel during the time of beast dominion. Furthermore, the gospel that is usually preached is very limited in understanding and is based largely on the Old Covenant.

The gospel that has been preached has been based largely on fear, rather than faith. “Get saved, or burn in hell,” they say. It is no wonder that so few have believed. Such preachers are much like the disciples who were fishing all night on the left side of the boat in John 21. In the morning, Jesus called to them and told them to “*cast the net on the right-hand side of the boat*” ([John 21:6](#)). The left side signifies judgment; the right side signifies mercy.

This was Jesus’ final lesson on how to become “*fishers of men*” ([Matt. 4:19](#)). Fishing on the left side of the boat is based on divine judgment, which is the inevitable result of the Old Covenant method of fear-based salvation. Fishing on the right side of the boat is based on the mercy of God. Because it is based on the oath and promise of God, rather than the vows and good intentions of men, it is truly “good news” and “glad tidings.” Strictly speaking, the Old Covenant gospel is, in the end, a message of bad news and does not conform to the literal definition of the *gospel*.

The Angel of Hastening Hope, however, proclaims the good news of the Kingdom, and the overcomers provide the double witness on earth which agrees with the heavenly message.

Chapter 10: The Angel of Abundant Clarity of Love

[Rev. 14:8](#) tells us that “another angel” will announce the fall of Babylon.

⁸ And another angel, a second one, followed, saying, Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who has made all the nations drink of the wine of the passion of her immorality.

In praying about this some years ago, the Father said it is the Angel of Abundant Clarity of Love. At first, I thought this was odd, but then I realized that it is the love of God that must overthrow Mystery Babylon. Babylon feeds on fear and thrives on hatred. As long as fear and hate are generated, Babylon remains spiritually strong. One cannot overthrow Babylon by hating or mistreating Babylonians, even if those Babylonians tend to mistreat or kill the overcomers.

Love is stronger than either fear or hatred, but it must be *clarified*, because only a few really understand the love of God. There are three levels of love—*eros*, *phileo*, and *agape*—and most people understand only the first two levels of love (attraction and brotherly love). The highest level is the kind that God has demonstrated. It is described by the Apostle Paul in [Rom. 5:7–10](#),

⁷ For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. ⁸ But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. ¹⁰ For if while we were yet enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

Babylonians do not understand the love of God. They only know how to love one of their own family, tribe, or nation. To most people it is a virtue to hate their “enemies.” Certainly, that has been the patriotic view since the beginning of time. After all, they say, such “enemies” do not deserve to be loved. And so the cycle of violence is perpetuated by those whose understanding of love is limited to *eros* or *phileo*.

Keep in mind that there is a difference between Babylon as a system and Babylonians as citizens of that system. The system will be destroyed; the people will be saved, for *the fact* of divine reconciliation has already been established at the cross, as Paul tells us, even if *the timing* of their salvation is yet future.

Those believers who have been taught that the majority of mankind will be lost normally find it difficult or impossible to believe that their Babylonian “enemies” are redeemable. When they do not view “the wicked” as future believers, they tend to treat them as “enemies” who are worthy only of death and destruction. But those who truly understand the love of God can see the face of Christ in the worst of sinners, even as Jacob—after his name was changed to Israel—was able to see the face of God in his wicked brother, Esau ([Gen. 33:10](#)).

When the wickedness of Mystery Babylon is uncovered (as described in [Rev. 18:24](#)), many people will be angry and wish to take vengeance upon the supporters and rulers of this “city.” I believe it is for this reason that the Angel of Abundant Clarity of Love is assigned to announce the fall of Babylon. Much love will be needed, and the love of God must be abundantly clarified in that day. Love does not negate justice, but mercy has a position higher (or above) justice, as we read in [James 2:13](#). I discussed this in my book, [James to the Twelve Tribes, chapter 11](#).

Hence, my personal revelation causes me to understand that a “Hope” angel drives the gospel of the Kingdom, while a “Love” angel announces the fall of Babylon. These are two of the three great attributes that Paul lists in [1 Cor. 13:13](#),

¹³ But now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

Watching for Babylon's Fall

[Rev. 14:8](#) is the first time that John mentions Babylon by name. It is in the context of her fall, not of her rise to power. It also suggests that Babylon remains hidden and largely unknown prior to its fall—hence, the “mystery.” John was quoting from [Isaiah 21:9](#),

⁹ ... and one answered and said, Fallen, fallen is Babylon; and all the images of her gods are shattered on the ground.

The judgments of God are directed against the false gods and the oppressive governments, along with the legal and economic systems of the earth. Babylon will fall through the gospel that the manifested overcomers will preach to the world through the power of love.

Providing the context of this announcement is the prophecy in the rest of Isaiah 21. Strangely enough, this announcement does not come in Isaiah's “*oracle concerning Babylon*” ([Isaiah 13:1](#)). Instead, it comes eight chapters later in “*the oracle concerning the wilderness of the sea*” ([Isaiah 21:1](#)). To get the full picture, of course, one must study both chapters, along with all of the prophecies by the other prophets.

[Isaiah 13:17](#) says, “*Behold, I am going to stir up the Medes against them.*” Earlier, God speaks of mustering His own army who are sent to overthrow Babylon, saying in [Isaiah 13:3](#),

³ I have commanded My consecrated ones, I have even called My mighty warriors, My proudly exulting ones, to execute My anger.

The next verse says, “*The Lord of hosts is mustering the army for battle*” ([Isaiah 13:4](#)). Hence, he calls the army of the Medes “*My mighty warriors*” who are called “*to execute My anger.*” The result is seen in [Isaiah 13:19, 20](#),

¹⁹ And Babylon, the beauty of kingdoms, the glory of the Chaldeans' pride, will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. ²⁰ It will never be inhabited or lived in from generation to generation, nor will the Arab pitch his tent there, nor will shepherds make their flocks lie down there.

The ancient city of Babylon today is uninhabited. The locals will not even camp there at night, for it is believed to be haunted. The end-time Babylon is no longer a single city, but a world-wide system, and when this system falls, it will lose all of its citizens. The Holy Spirit will be poured out, and Babylonians everywhere will repent. They will immigrate from Babylon to the Kingdom of God.

Here is where it is important to understand the loving purpose of this second angel, for it is by the abundant clarity of love that Babylon “*will never be inhabited or lived in from generation to generation.*” It does not mean that all Babylonians will be killed, as some have taught. It means they will all declare allegiance to the rightful Heir of all things, for [Isaiah 45:23](#) tells us,

²³ I have sworn by Myself, the word has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness and will not turn back, that to Me every knee will bow, every tongue will swear allegiance.

This is God's personal vow as He swears by Himself, and therefore it describes the New Covenant. This is not mere wishful thinking, nor does its success depend upon the will of man. God has taken the responsibility upon Himself to turn every heart and to bend every man's will to conform to His own in the end.

With this in mind, we may read Isaiah 21 and see the context in which the prophet says in verse 9, “*fallen, fallen is Babylon.*” Earlier, in verse 2 we read, “*Go up, Elam, lay siege, Media; I have made an end of all the groaning she (Babylon) has caused.*” So here again Media (i.e., “the Medes”) are commanded to lay siege to Babylon.

The prophet then pictures refugees arriving from Babylon—evidence of Babylon's fall. [Isaiah 21:6, 7](#) says,

⁶ For thus the Lord says to me, “Go, station the lookout [or “watchman”], let him report what he sees. ⁷ When he sees riders, horsemen in pairs, a train of donkeys, a train of camels, let him pay close attention, very close attention.”

Perhaps the watchman is instructed to “*pay close attention, very close attention*” because most of the watchmen today have missed the significance of this camel caravan (unbelievers) and donkey train (Pentecostals). Perhaps we might paraphrase this to mean: “*When the watchmen see a big refugee problem, let him pay very close attention, because many could miss the fact that it is a sign of Babylon’s fall.*”

In recent years the world has seen a huge refugee problem, caused by the Babylonian plan to overthrow many governments. This plan has caused chaos and anarchy, and many have fled to Western countries for refuge. It is ironic that they flee to the very nations which have caused chaos in their own countries. In the end, the Babylonian rulers do not realize that they have set up the very sign of collapse that was prophesied by Isaiah. [Isaiah 21:8](#), [9](#) continues,

⁸ Then the lookout called, “O Lord, I stand continually by day on the watchtower, and I am stationed every night at my guard post. ⁹ Now behold, here comes a troop of riders, horsemen in pairs.” And one answered and said, “fallen, fallen is Babylon; and all the images of her gods are shattered on the ground.”

John tells us in [Rev. 14:8](#) that the one answering the lookout is an angel. I identify him as the Angel of Abundant Clarity of Love. It is the angel that gives clear vision to the lookout as he strains to see what is coming and pays close attention to understand what he sees. John speaks of Babylon as being the one “*who has made all the nations drink of the wine of the passion of her immorality*” ([Rev. 14:8](#)). But [Isaiah 21:10](#) says,

¹⁰ O my threshed people, and my afflicted of the threshing floor! What I have heard from the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, I make known to you.

A threshing floor is the place where men thresh wheat in order to remove its chaff and render it fit to eat. The Latin word for a “threshing sledge” is *tribulum*, from which we derive the word tribulation. In Hebrew metaphoric language, a threshing floor was a place of tribulation. So when Isaiah says the people have been “threshed” on the “threshing floor,” he was referring to the Babylonian captivity which (in his day) had not yet begun.

Isaiah lived to see the Assyrians put the house of Israel into captivity, but he does not tell us that Assyria has fallen. Instead, he refers to the Babylonian captivity, for this would relate better to Daniel’s prophecies regarding Babylon and the beast systems in general.

When we link the two prophecies of Isaiah and John, we see that the Babylonian captivity threshed the people by forcing the people to “*drink the wine of the passion of her immorality.*” In other words, Babylon was pictured as a harlot, a spiritually lawless “woman” pretending to be the bride of Christ. She is a harlot because the only way to be part of the true bride of Christ is through the New Covenant marriage contract. But Christ has no intention of marrying Babylon.

One must be part of the New Jerusalem to be married to Christ ([Rev. 21:2](#)), for she is the true bride of Christ. This city-bride is pictured in [Gal. 4:26](#) as “Sarah,” the mother of those who are called as inheritors of the promises of God. Those who claim the old Jerusalem as their spiritual mother are children of the flesh and must ultimately be cast out ([Gal. 4:30](#)).

The children of spiritual Hagar are people of the Old Covenant, which is ruled by fear. The children of spiritual Sarah are of the New Covenant, which is ruled by Love.

Chapter 11: The Angel of Severance

[Revelation 14:9–12](#) says,

⁹ And another angel, a third one, followed them, saying with a loud voice, “If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or upon his hand, ¹⁰ he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. ¹¹ And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; and they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name. ¹² Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.

There are many elements in this passage, which will be explained one at a time.

The Third Angel

Some years ago the Father identified this angel as the Angel of Severance. As with the first two angels, I was not allowed to meet him personally or to interact with him, because, as He said, this would serve only to give me “bragging rights.” Nonetheless, the Father readily identified all three angels in order to equip me with the knowledge needed as a teacher to understand these passages and to expound on them to others.

The name of an angel speaks of his mission and place in the divine plan. Others may know these angels by other names according to their own revelation. Just as men are often given more than one name, so also can it be with angels. Sometimes a single name does not fully describe the calling of an angel.

The Angel of Severance clearly speaks of separating the overcomers from the rest of humanity in order to distinguish them as the ones called to rule the Kingdom at the end of the time allotted to the beasts. This also distinguishes those qualified for the first resurrection from other believers, preparing them for the events of Revelation 20. The main calling of this angel is to distinguish those who worship the beast and receive his mark from those who persevere in keeping “*the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.*”

We have already shown how this worship has to do with the love of money. The “mark” on the hand and forehead is the mark of lawlessness, contrasting such people (including believers) with those who metaphorically bind His law to their foreheads and hands, as prescribed in the law. Yet we also need to understand the divine judgment upon these lawless ones, because so many interpret this according to the view that they have been taught by others.

The Wine of the Wrath of God

[Rev. 14:10](#) says that God’s opponents (that is, those who do not repent) will have to drink of the wine of the wrath of God. This is obviously symbolic language, for no one will have to literally drink some wine. The language used here is taken from Jeremiah’s prophecies that originally applied to the literal city of Babylon. [Jer. 25:15–17](#) says,

¹⁵ For thus the Lord, the God of Israel, says to me, “Take this cup of the wine of wrath from My hand, and cause all the nations to whom I send you to drink it. ¹⁶ And they shall drink and stagger and go mad because of the sword that I will send among them.” ¹⁷ Then I took the cup from the Lord’s hand, and made all the nations drink, to whom the Lord sent me.

Jeremiah did not literally take a cup out of God’s hand and make nations drink of the wine. Perhaps he poured out a cup of wine upon the ground, or perhaps it was all done on a purely spiritual level. We are not told. But the result of this “wine” was to confuse the understanding of the nations that God was judging. “*They shall...go mad because of the sword that I will send among them.*”

The “wine” is also the “sword.” And “*the cup of His anger*” ([Rev. 14:10](#)) is the same as “*the wine of the wrath of God*.” Let us not think of this “wrath” and “anger” as an emotional response, as if God has a temper or becomes frustrated. Frustration is an emotion that comes from being helpless to change a situation. God is sovereign and does not suffer from temper tantrums or fits of frustration. His “wrath” is a judicial wrath, not an emotional wrath.

The Divine Sword

In ancient times, God sent a literal sword upon Babylon by the hand of Medo-Persia. However, the sword that is used in the book of Revelation is “*the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*” ([Eph. 6:17](#)). This is made plain in [Rev. 1:16](#), which says, “*out of His mouth came a sharp, two-edged sword*.”

This is confirmed later in [Rev. 19:15](#), which says,

¹⁵ And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may smite the nations ...

It is the same “sword” that God used through His prophets in the Old Testament. [Hosea 6:5](#), [6](#) says,

⁵ Therefore I have hewn them in pieces by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of My mouth; and the judgments on you are like the light that goes forth. ⁶ For I delight in loyalty rather than sacrifice, and in the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.

In other words, God “slew” them and cut them in pieces with WORDS. Why? Because He preferred loyalty to Him rather than sacrifice. In other words, He did not want to literally kill them, so He did NOT use a physical sword. The sword He used was the one described everywhere in the New Testament. And this is the “sword” by which He will slay the nations, as described in the book of Revelation.

This tells us that His intent is NOT to shed blood, but to cause people to repent by the word of His mouth. And so, while the description is presented in terms of physical warfare, destruction, and blood, this is not really what God intends for the nations at all. The nations are God’s inheritance—and ours—so it would make no sense to destroy them. The only thing that God intends to destroy is oppressive government and false religion that burdens the people today and deceives them into doing violence to others.

Tormenting People with Fire and Brimstone

[Rev. 14:10](#) says that those receiving the mark “*will be tormented with fire and brimstone*.” Once again, let us not think of God as a torturer. The law does not specify torture as a proper judgment of divine law. The law itself is pictured as a fire in [Deut. 33:2](#), [3](#) (KJV), saying, “*from His right hand went a fiery law for them... all His saints are in Thy hand*.”

The fire of God comes from His right hand, the place of rulership, and all of His saints are in His hand. In other words, the “fiery law” in God’s hand is not only His law, but is also identified with the “saints” in His hand. When the law is written on the hearts of the overcomers, *they become His fiery law*, and they become the administrators of divine justice and rulership in the earth. The overcomers are the manifested sons of God administering the divine law to the world according to the mind of Christ. This is the meaning of the “fire” as God intended it from the beginning.

[Rev. 14:9–11](#) tells us that those who continue to worship the beast and his image (money) will drink of the wine of God’s judicial wrath, “*and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence [enopion, “face”] of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb*.”

Men have long interpreted this literally, as if God plans to torture sinners in front of Him like the kings of the beast systems have done to their opponents over the centuries. But God is not like them. In fact, it is because of their unjust and cruel torture policies that God will remove them from their positions of authority over the earth. God will not have unjust tyrants ruling in His Kingdom—not even Christian tyrants like King Saul or the popes. Torture, when used as

a general punishment, is *evidence of lawlessness*. The law, which establishes the fact that the judgment must be limited to the extent of the crime itself, is an expression of the character of God Himself.

In [Matt. 18:23–35](#) Jesus told a parable of the Kingdom, where a debtor was called into account. He could not pay a huge debt, so the creditor forgave the debt. The former debtor, however, refused to forgive his neighbor a relatively small debt. In fact, in the parable he “*threw him in prison until he should pay back what was owed*” ([Matt. 18:30](#)).

When this became known, the original creditor, who had forgiven the very large debt, treated the man according to his own standard of measure and reinstated the former debt. Since the man could not pay it, verses 34, 35 concludes,

³⁴ And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers [*basanistes*] until he should repay all that was owed him. ³⁵ So shall My heavenly Father also do to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart.

Are we to understand from this that God will torture anyone who fails to forgive his neighbor? If so, this would include the majority of Christians throughout history. What about Paul’s doctrine in [Eph. 2:8](#), which says, “*by grace you have been saved through faith*”? Are we to understand that this “grace” is nullified or ineffective if we hold any grudge against our neighbor?

If we interpret Jesus’ parable in the way that many do, it would strike fear in the heart of every believer and put doubt in nearly every heart. If I begrudge my neighbor for stealing \$20 from me, will I lose my salvation and be tortured forever on account of this one sin? How could a \$20 sin deserve an eternity of torture? Is that really divine justice? Is that what the law reveals? Not at all.

The main misunderstanding is rooted in language and translation. Every language uses euphemisms and other expressions that have a basis in truth, but are not to be taken literally. In this case, the key to understanding the word “torture” (or “torment” in the KJV) is explained in Dr. Bullinger’s notes on [Matthew 18:34](#),

34 tormentors; or jailors. Gr. basanistes. Occurs only here. Imprisonment was called in Roman law-books, cruciatus corporis.

Thayer’s Greek Lexicon defines *basanistes* as meaning:

one who elicits the truth by the use of the rack; an inquisitor; torturer... used in Matt. Xviii. 34 of a jailor... doubtless because the business of torturing was also assigned to him.

So we see that jailors, or prison wardens, were called *basanistes*, because under Roman or Greek law, it included their task of torturing prisoners to elicit “truth.” Bullinger says that in Roman law-books, imprisonment was called *cruciatus corporis*, “physical torture.” But in God’s law, there are no prisons, for lawbreakers were required to work to pay the debts owed to their victims ([Exodus 22:3](#)). Jesus’ parable was not meant to advocate the prison system, nor did He condone torture in violation of the divine law. He was using the common word of the day for a jailor without advocating the sins that jailors often performed at the command of their rulers.

In [Rev. 14:10](#), those who worship the beast “will be tormented” (*basanizo*). It is the verb form of the noun *basanistes*. Jailors imprison people, but do not always torture them physically. John uses the common metaphoric language of the day, but if we do not understand the difference between God’s justice and men’s justice, we will most certainly interpret this in terms of the beast systems and thereby attribute injustice to God.

While men often used fire to torture their prisoners, God’s law forbids this unless a torturer has been brought to justice. If someone has tortured others by fire, then and only then can he receive the same treatment. The judgment must always fit the crime. This is the meaning of [Exodus 21:23–25](#), which says,

²³ But if there is any further injury, then you shall appoint as a penalty life for life, ²⁴ eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, ²⁵ burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise.

The law demands equal punishment, but the law also allows every victim the right to forgive. For this reason, even if punishment is warranted by the law, there is opportunity for forgiveness, especially if the victim sees repentance in the heart of the sinner.

In Jesus' parable in Matthew 18, there is no indication that the debtor knew secrets that needed to be extracted by the use of torture. The creditor already knew the full extent of the debt. Likewise, in [Rev. 14:10](#) the great Judge of the whole earth does not need to apply torture to elicit the truth. Neither would such torture be lawful in most cases. Only those who have tortured others might find themselves tortured for a time. Yet even then, because their sin is limited, so also is the judgment.

No man has opportunity to torture people beyond his own lifetime, and so the divine law could not torture any man for eternity. An eternal sentence would violate the nature of God as expressed by His own law.

Two Types of Resurrection

[Rev. 14:10](#) says that those who worship the earth beast and receive his "mark" will drink from the "*undiluted ... cup of His indignation*" (The Emphatic Diaglott). Further, "*he shall be tormented with fire and sulphur in the presence of the holy angels.*" This is a reference to the Great White Throne judgment, where all of mankind (other than the overcomers) must stand and give account of themselves.

At the Great White Throne, described in [Rev. 20:11–15](#), both believers and unbelievers will be judged, for Jesus describes this moment in [John 5:28, 29](#),

²⁸ Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, ²⁹ and shall come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.

It is clear that the judgment at the Great White Throne will include both believers and unbelievers. Believers will be raised "*to a resurrection of life*," and unbelievers "*to a resurrection of judgment*." Speaking of believers, Paul makes it clear in [1 Cor. 3:13–15](#) that "*the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work*," and "*he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire*." There is no contradiction between judgment and salvation, for there are many believers who will experience an appropriate level of fiery judgment before they are given their reward of immortal life. Fortunately for them, this "fire" is not literal, except perhaps in certain cases.

Believers who have not learned to forgive, or who have harbored the love of money in their hearts, or who have supported the earth beast, will find many of their works "burned up" by the fire of divine judgment. Yet Paul tells us, "*but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire*."

Why? Because by definition all genuine believers have laid Christ as the Foundation of their "temple," regardless of which building materials they used to build upon that Foundation. Hence, even if the whole temple is destroyed by the divine fire, the Foundation remains intact. If the foundation remains firm, a new and improved temple can be built upon it afterward.

Unbelievers, on the other hand, who do not have Jesus Christ as their Foundation, will receive "*a resurrection of judgment*," Jesus says. The fiery law will affect them for a longer time until they are finally set free by the law of Jubilee at the end of time.

This is the "*lake of fire*" in [Rev. 20:14, 15](#), and it is also the "*river of fire*" in [Dan. 7:10](#). In each case, the fire is not literal, but describes the "*fiery law*" ([Deut. 33:2 KJV](#)). The fire, John tells us, is applied "*in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb*" to each man according to his works.

Brimstone, or Sulfur

John also speaks of “brimstone” (KJV, NASB), which is actually sulfur, or Sulphur (The Emphatic Diaglott). The Greek word is *theon*, which, according to Thayer’s Lexicon, means:

“divine incense, because burning brimstone was regarded as having power to purify and to ward off contagion.”

When John wrote his book, sulfur, or brimstone, was thought of as a divine purification agent. The metaphor did not elicit pictures of a prison where men were tortured by fire, but a temple where men were purified by “divine incense” from burning sulfur. Thus, John uses “fire and sulfur” to indicate that men would be judged by God’s law (fire) for the purpose of divine purification, or correction, so that they could be “*saved so as through fire*” (as Paul puts it).

God’s law forbids and abhors any punishment that does not fit the crime (evil deed), for such judgment goes against His nature. In fact, God manifested Himself only as “*a consuming fire*” ([Deut. 4:24](#)) when He gave the fiery law to Israel. The law, then, is the expression of His nature. [1 John 4:8](#) says “*God is love.*” This is the overriding standard by which God does everything, especially when He judges the world. While we should never minimize His justice, neither should we subject His love to justice, but rather subject His justice to love.

For this reason the law provides limitations in the administration of justice, whether by the limit of 40 lashes ([Deut. 25:3](#)) or by the law of Jubilee ([Lev. 25:54](#)). The purpose of the law and of divine judgment is to rehabilitate sinners, not to destroy them forever. Even the death penalty is only a temporary measure, which ends with resurrection, when they are summoned to the Great White Throne and when their actual rehabilitation actually begins in the “fire” of God.

The Ages of Ages

The Ages following the Great White Throne judgment are known as *the Ages of Ages*, that is, the climax of all the ages of earth time. In previous ages, men were “free” to sin without legal constraints other than by the laws of men. But the Great White Throne marks a new era. All sinners are issued an arrest warrant and are summoned to the divine court for a hearing and for judgment. Then they will be “sold” and put under authority in order to teach them proper behavior and attitudes.

At the Great White Throne, all sinners will learn the truth about God and of Christ. This new revelation will cause every knee to bow and every tongue to confess allegiance to Him as their “Lord” ([Isaiah 45:23](#); [Phil. 2:10, 11](#)). This will be the first step in their rehabilitation, for once they have become believers, they must still learn obedience as bond-servants of Jesus Christ—even as every believer since the beginning has had to learn.

Becoming a believer is not the only requirement. They must also grow spiritually by “*the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ*” ([Eph. 4:13](#)).

Those under divine judgment will be “sold” as slaves according to the divine law to the overcomers ([Exodus 22:3](#)). It will be the responsibility of their new masters to rehabilitate and train them by example to know Christ and His ways until the Creation Jubilee, when “*the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God*” ([Rom. 8:21](#)).

So John says in [Rev. 14:11](#) (quoting The Emphatic Diaglott),

¹¹ And the smoke of their torment [imprisonment, confinement, restriction under slavery] rises up for Ages of Ages; and they shall have no rest day and night, who worship the beast and his image, and if any one receive the mark of his name.

Smoke is evidence of fire. The evidence of the divine law in this case is the restriction under which these ex-unbelievers must live during the “Ages of Ages.” They will not be free to do as they wish as free men. Their freedom to sin has ended. They will be monitored at all times, and the law will be enforced. Only righteous acts are permitted in this new order. This is the “smoke” or *evidence of their restrictions* as bondservants of Christ and the overcomers.

No Rest Day and Night

John says also that “*they have no rest day and night.*” Those who picture this as a torture chamber understand this to mean that it is impossible to get any sleep when one is in great pain. But when we understand this as a long time of slavery and restriction prior to creation’s release, then we may interpret this in a more biblical manner.

The biblical concept of “rest” is explained in [Heb. 3:8–11](#) says,

⁸ For if Joshua had given them rest, He would not have spoken of another day after that. ⁹ There remains therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God. ¹⁰ For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His. ¹¹ Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall through following the same example of disobedience.

This admonition was given to the church, showing how the church in the wilderness had failed to enter God’s rest. God’s rest is the Jubilee, and Israel had refused to enter the Promised Land on the 50th Jubilee from Adam. They believed the evil report of the ten spies, rather than the good report of Caleb and Joshua. So that generation died in the wilderness and did not enter the position of “rest” that characterizes the promise of God.

As long as one is enslaved to sin, a person is not in a position of “rest.” Slavery is the opposite of rest. Those who are sentenced to slavery at the Great White Throne will not obtain “rest” during the Ages of Ages. However, because every knee will bow to Christ at the start of these final Ages, and because they will be trained by the overcomers in the ways of God during those final Ages, it is guaranteed that they will enter God’s rest, His Jubilee, at the end of the final Age.

The New Covenant Promise

This rest is guaranteed by the New Covenant, wherein God swore an oath to make this happen. [Isaiah 45:23](#) says,

²³ I have sworn by Myself, the word has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness and will not turn back, that to Me every knee will bow, every tongue will swear allegiance.

This is another way of expressing God’s oath in [Deut. 29:12–15](#), where all the people gathered together,

¹² that you may enter into the covenant with the Lord your God and into His oath which the Lord your God is making with you today, ¹³ in order that He may establish you today as His people and that He may be your God, just as He spoke to you and as He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. ¹⁴ Now not with you alone am I making this covenant and this oath, ¹⁵ but both with those who stand here with us today in the presence of the Lord your God and with those who are not with us here today.

This oath came out of God’s promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to bless all nations and all families of the earth ([Gen. 12:3](#)). For this reason, He did not limit His oath to those standing there with Moses, but included “*those who are not with us here today.*” The fact that even the non-Israelites were included ([Deut 29:11](#)) shows that this New Covenant was not given only to Israel, but to all mankind.

The Perseverance of the Saints

[Revelation 14:12](#) says:

The Revelation: Book 5 - Chapter 11: The Angel of Severance

Page 369 of 618

¹² Here is the perseverance [“patient endurance”] of the saints [“holy ones”] who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.

John says that the holy ones, empowered by the holy angels, have endured much hardship and tribulation in order to avoid the judgment of God at the Great White Throne. Their goal is to be part of the overcomer company who will reign with Christ and who will have authority over others and have responsibility to train sinners in the Ages to come.

Like the Old Testament saints in Hebrews 11, they have endured to the end in order to obtain a “*better resurrection*” ([Heb.11:35](#)). For, you see, these saints, or holy ones, are the first to be raised from the dead ([Rev. 20:5](#)), the first to be manifested, the first to come into the experience of the Feast of Tabernacles. They are the first fruits company who are blessed to enter God’s rest and to receive the promises of God before the rest of creation.

The Angel of Severance is assigned the job of distinguishing between the two companies. His flaming sword prevents those who are not yet qualified from having access to the tree of life. His actions sever the unbelievers from the believers as well as the church from the overcomers. Each group is then judged differently at the Great White Throne.

Chapter 12: The Blessed Ones

[Revelation 14:13](#) reads,

¹³ And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, Write, “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on! Yes, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them.”

The Greek word translated “blessed” is *makarios*, which refers to a state of blessedness, rather than an act of blessing. It is the same word used in the Beatitudes of those who are “blessed.” Why are these people “blessed” if they “*die in the Lord from now on*”? What does “now” mean? To what time frame is this referring?

First of all, these “blessed” ones are those “*who die in the Lord*.” In other words, John was speaking of believers, and no doubt this refers to “the saints” in the previous verse. Yet the time frame, “*from now on*,” has to do with the time of judgment when the nations “*drink of the wine of the wrath of God*.” This is the time when the beasts have concluded their contract with God to rule the earth and are finally brought to judgment for misusing their God-given authority.

During the time that the saints rule the Kingdom, those who are raised in the first resurrection will be immortal, so verse 13 could only refer to them if this refers to the brief interval between the fall of Babylon and that first resurrection. More likely this refers more generally to all believers, otherwise John would have used the term from the previous verse, “Blessed are *the saints* who die from now on.” But the phrase “*the dead who die in the Lord*” probably refers more generally to all believers during the thousand years lying ahead.

Conditions During the Thousand Years

In [Dan. 2:35](#) the fall of the beast systems of government comes about from the great stone kingdom that strikes the image on its feet and then grinds it to powder. Then we read,

³⁵ ... But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

In Daniel’s interpretation in verse 44 we read,

⁴⁴ And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever.

In other words, this thousand-year Tabernacles Age is the time when the Kingdom of God will start to fill the whole earth. The implication is that this will not all happen immediately, but will take more than a thousand years to accomplish. It will be done under the ministry of the overcomers who will have the full anointing of the Feast of Tabernacles—that is, the *fullness* of the Spirit.

The “saints” who reign with Christ during this Age will continually take more and more ground as the Kingdom of God grows and the kingdom of darkness shrinks. When [Rev. 14:12](#) says, “*Here is the perseverance of the saints*,” John uses the term *hupomeno*, a compound word that is almost impossible to translate into English. *Hupo* means “under,” and *meno* means “to abide, to dwell.” Compounded together, it means “to gain more and more ground, as in warfare.” This describes the continual increase of the Kingdom in the Age to come.

At the start of this Age, as the first nations declare Jesus Christ to be their King, those who oppose His rule “*shall be cast out into the outer darkness*” ([Matt. 8:12](#)). Many have supposed that these will not be able to enter the Kingdom, even if they repent, because they usually equate this “outer darkness” with a “hell” from which there is no escape. However, the outer darkness contrasts with the Kingdom of Light, which is described in [Rev. 21:23–26](#),

²³ And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb. ²⁴ And the nations shall walk by its light, and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory into it. ²⁵ And in the daytime (for there shall be no night there) its gates shall never be closed; ²⁶ and they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it.

Yet John makes it clear in the next verse that no unbelievers will be able to enter this “city,” that is, the New Jerusalem. In other words, “the nations” *will enter as believers* seeking the light and knowledge of the law and ways of God. As the Kingdom of Light increases its territory over the earth, many will be converted and gain citizenship in the Kingdom.

[Isaiah 2:2, 3, 4](#) tells us that many nations will come to (prophetic) Zion to learn the laws of God. “*All the nations will stream to it*,” Isaiah says. So it can hardly be said that once men are cast out of the Kingdom, there will be no further opportunity for salvation. The primary purpose of the growth of the “stone” is to encompass all nations and incorporate all men under the rule of the rightful Heir and King of the earth.

Yet from [Rev. 20:7–9](#) we see that even at the end of the thousand years the Kingdom of God has not filled the entire earth, for when Satan is loosed, he is able “*to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth*.” From this we understand that there will be unbelievers in the earth virtually until the time of the Great White Throne judgment. Only then, when all are arrested and brought to trial, will *every* knee bow. Meanwhile, as [Rev. 22:15](#) says,

¹⁵ Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying.

Though life spans will be greatly increased, there will still be death during that thousand-year period of the Tabernacles Age. [Isaiah 65:20](#) describes it,

²⁰ No longer will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his days; for the youth will die at the age of one hundred and the one who does not reach the age of one hundred shall be thought accursed.

This verse describes the blessed state of those “*who die in the Lord from now on*.” It is only after this thousand-year Age of Tabernacles that death will be abolished ([Rev. 20:14](#)). Death will be the *last* enemy abolished—not the first, as is often taught.

There will yet be many “enemies” of Christ (those not yet reconciled to Him) during the Tabernacles Age. These will not be subjected fully to the authority of Christ until the time of the Great White Throne judgment. Yet when they are brought to court, they will not be able to resist and will lose all right to sin, for then Jesus Christ will claim the whole earth by the Law of Creator’s Rights.

Chapter 13: The Son of Man

After telling us briefly about the “*blessed*” ones “*who die in the Lord from now on*,” [Rev. 14:14](#) says,

¹⁴ And I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and sitting on the cloud was one like a son of man, having a golden crown on His head, and a sharp sickle in His hand.

When Jesus was questioned by the high priest as to whether or not He was the Messiah, He said in [Matt. 26:64](#),

⁶⁴ Jesus said to him, You have said it yourself; nevertheless I tell you, hereafter you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power and coming on the clouds of heaven.

According to Dr. Bullinger’s notes on [Psalm 8:4](#) in The Companion Bible, the term *son of man* “relates to dominion in the earth.” He says also Appendix 98, section XVI,

“This title, when used of Christ, always has the Article When used of a human being, as in Ezekiel, it never has the Article”

When John uses this term in [Rev. 14:14](#) above, there is no article (“the”). This is why the NASB renders it “*one like a son of man*.” So who is this “son of man”? It is the corporate “son,” the body of overcomers manifesting the nature and character of THE Son of Man, Jesus Christ.

It is the *arnion*, the little lambs that Jesus said to feed in [John 21:15](#)—not the *Amnos*, who is the Lamb taking away the sin of the world ([John 1:29](#)). Yet, keep in mind that this corporate “son” includes both Jesus (the Head) and the sons of God (His Body). In a sense, this is a joint work of the New Creation Man that is called to bring righteousness to the earth.

This “son of man” has a crown on his head. Obviously, Jesus Himself is the highest authority, because He was the firstborn from the dead ([Col. 1:18](#)). But when the sons of God are raised in the first resurrection to join those who are yet alive, they are like the second-born from the dead. They will have the next highest authority. Authority is based upon the order of birth.

The Apostle Paul wrote just before his martyrdom to his co-worker in [2 Tim. 4:8](#),

⁸ In the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

Paul was speaking of that son of man with the crown of righteousness in [Rev. 14:14](#). It included Paul, and “*also to all who have loved His appearing*.”

This is also the same “son of man” who carries “*a sharp sickle in his hand*.” While the Head of this “son of man” is Christ, the hand is part of the body. The Head directs the hand, but the hand actually carries out the work as the executor of His will. The “sickle” is meant to give us a prophetic picture, rather than seeing it as a literal farm instrument. So what is its meaning?

The Sickle and Harvest Time

[Revelation 14:15](#), [16](#) says,

¹⁵ And another angel came out of the temple, crying out with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, “Put in your sickle and reap, because the hour to reap has come, because the harvest of the earth is ripe.” ¹⁶ And He who sat on the cloud swung His sickle over the earth; and the earth was reaped.

Reaping is done only when the harvest is ripe. In a personal application, each person is ready for harvest at a different point in his life. But in Jesus' parable in [Matt. 13:39](#), He prophesies that "*the harvest is the end of the age.*" The point of the "harvest" theme is that God has sown good seed into the earth, but that it takes time for that crop to ripen. One should not try to reap a crop before it is ripe. [James 5:7, 8](#) says,

⁷ Be patient, therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. Behold, the farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains. ⁸ You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

Those who study timing are better equipped with patience than those who do not study timing. There is, of course, more than one level of timing for people to study. First there is the long-term study of things like the Pentecostal Age and the Tabernacles Age. The verses above refer to such things.

Secondly, there is the short-term timing in one's own personal life. God may have sown His word in the lives of multitudes, but not all of those seeds have germinated. Yet some ripen every day. This has gone on for generations. In this sense, Jesus said in [John 4:35](#),

³⁵ Do you not say, There are yet four months, and then comes the harvest? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest.

In other words, while we must be patient for the greater fulfillment of the harvest at the end of the age, there is even now a work to be done on an individual basis. There are many individuals who are now "ripe" for harvest, even though we must have patience with those who are yet unripe.

But let us not pit [John 4:35](#) against [James 5:7](#), for then we will have one side arguing against the other, when in reality, both are correct on their own level.

[Rev. 14:15, 16](#) (quoted earlier) is not talking on the individual level. It is a long-term prophecy of "*the end of the age*" ([Matt.13:39](#)). What sort of reaping is it? That really depends upon which people we want to discuss.

The harvest of the field (i.e., "the world"—[Matt.13:38](#)) begins with the presentation of the first fruits (overcomers). When the sons of God are manifested after the first resurrection, the overcomers will be the first fruits of a general harvest. This is why [Rev. 14:1–5](#) speaks of the overcomers being manifested. Presenting first fruits always marks the beginning of a harvest. Then immediately in verse 6 John speaks of the gospel being preached to all nations. That is the general harvest of the "field." That preaching brings about the final collapse of "Babylon" in verse 8.

A farmer harvests wheat in order to make bread out of it—not to destroy the crop. Even so, God is a farmer who sends His angels to harvest His field—the world. While it is true that the tares are removed first ([Matt.13:24–30](#)), we ought not to think of the tares as being all non-Christians. Tares are imitation wheat. Tares look like wheat and can only be distinguished toward harvest. At that time, the grains of wheat are heavy and cause the wheat to bow. The tares have a small, black, poisonous seed that is lightweight and can easily be seen standing above the wheat at the time of harvest.

The tares are those who claim to be God's chosen, but who are only imitators, whose doctrines are poisonous. They are the followers of the Old Jerusalem, "the bloody city" ([Ezekiel 22:2](#)), rather than those of the New Jerusalem, the true "City of Peace." They are twins like Jacob and Esau, making it difficult for most people to distinguish between them. The removal of the tares will precede the actual harvest. That time is nearly here.

Gathering the First Fruits

Before any reaping can take place, the first fruits must be offered to God in order to sanctify (or authorize) the harvest. For this reason, the overcomers are called "*first fruits to God and to the Lamb*" in [Rev. 14:4](#). They are not "reaped" as part of the general harvest in the rest of the chapter. Instead, they are "gathered" in [Matt. 24:30, 31](#),

³⁰ and then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory. ³¹ And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.

And so [Rev. 14:14](#) pictures “one like a son of man” coming on “a white cloud.” The event described is a gathering of “His elect,” and for this reason the angels are sent “with a great trumpet.” The timing of the first resurrection, which includes only these “elect” (overcomers), is at the feast of Trumpets, which commemorates the construction of two silver trumpets in [Num. 10:1–4](#). Josephus describes it this way:

“Moreover, Moses was the inventor of the form of their trumpet, which was made of silver... Two of these being made, one of them was sounded when they required the multitude to come together to congregations. When the first of them gave a signal, the heads of the tribes were to assemble, and consult about the affairs to them properly belonging; but when they gave the signal by both of them, they called the multitude together” (*Antiquities of the Jews*, III, xii, 6).

When Paul spoke of the resurrection of the dead in [1 Thess. 4:16](#), he said that the dead would arise “with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God.” The word for trumpet is singular, showing that this was to gather only the leaders, not the congregation as a whole. Likewise, in [1 Cor. 15:52](#) Paul again speaks of the resurrection of the dead and the transformation of the living overcomers “at the last trumpet.”

Paul did not explain the difference between the first resurrection and the general resurrection, but John does so in Revelation 20, when he writes of two resurrections a thousand years apart. The point is that in [Matt. 24:30, 31](#) Jesus spoke of a trumpet (singular) that was to be used to “gather together His elect,” that is, the overcomers who are the leaders of the congregation.

If we extend this theme beyond the scope of Revelation 14, we may identify this gathering more broadly with the barley harvest, which is the first of the harvests. John was actually seeing three distinct harvests in this chapter, dealing with three different groups of people. The barley represents the overcomers, the wheat represents the church as a whole, and the grapes represent the rest of creation. Barley is winnowed, wheat is threshed, and grapes are trodden under foot.

Each is treated in an increasingly violent manner of judgment, but the ultimate purpose is to extract that which is good for use on God’s Communion Table. In the end, God gets His unleavened bread (barley), His leavened bread (wheat), and the wine (grapes). This is the basic outline of the divine plan whereby He intends to restore His creation.

Reaping the Wheat

[Rev. 14:15, 16](#) pictures a scene of reaping spiritual “wheat,”

¹⁵ And another angel came out of the temple, crying out with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, “Put in your sickle and reap, because the hour to reap has come, because the harvest of the earth is ripe.” ¹⁶ And He who sat on the cloud swung His sickle over the earth, and the earth was reaped.

We are not told specifically what was reaped, but the next verses tell us of a second harvest of *grapes*. The first harvest, then, must be of *wheat*, which always came at the time of Pentecost.

Jesus spoke of this wheat harvest in a parable in [Matt. 13:24–30](#). In the parable, a man “sowed good seed in his field.” ([Matt. 13:24](#)). Verse 26 tells us that it was “wheat,” and by this we know that this Kingdom parable is primarily about the church in the Age of Pentecost. (See my book, [The Wheat and Asses of Pentecost](#).) Then the wheat field is corrupted by tares, sown by an “enemy.” The command is given to allow them both to grow together until the time of harvest when they can be distinguished by their fruit.

The tares are then removed from the wheat field before the wheat is harvested. “*First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn*” ([Matt. 13:30](#)). Jesus later explains the time of harvest, saying in verse 39, “*the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels.*”

This is the time frame covered in [Rev. 14:15, 16](#). When the various “beasts” have finished their allotted time to rule the earth, the time of harvest finally arrives. The poisonous tares, which appeared as counterfeit wheat in the church, will be identified and separated for judgment. Likewise, at the same time, the works of the church will also be tried by the same fire. Paul says in [1 Cor. 3:13](#), “*the fire itself will test the quality of each man’s work.*” Verse 15 says,

¹⁵ If any man’s work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire.

The angel mentioned in [Rev. 14:15](#) does not appear to do any harvesting himself. Instead, he is seen calling out to the “*one like a son of man*” to thrust in His sickle. He is the Threshing Angel who must await the harvest before he can do his assigned task. By my own personal revelation, this is the same angel that brought judgment to Israel in 2 Samuel 24, but whose judgment was stopped (limited) by David’s hastily-built altar on the threshing floor of Arunah in Jerusalem ([2 Sam. 24:16](#)). It prophesied of the cross, where Jesus was offered as the Sacrifice for sin in order to stop the judgment.

In the time of David, the Threshing Angel stood by the threshing floor when he was told “*it is enough.*” Many years later, when Jesus completed His suffering on the cross—perhaps on that very location—He said, “*It is finished*” ([John 19:30](#)). Perhaps in [Rev. 14:15](#) the Threshing Angel was still operating under that order to cease when he called out to the Son of Man to thrust in His sickle. Without the sickle, he had nothing to thresh, but he understood that his work would continue at the end of the age.

We now come to still another angel who presides over the wine press of God, depicting the grape harvest in the earth.

Chapter 14: The Grape Harvest

[Revelation 14:17](#) says,

¹⁷ And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, and he also had a sharp sickle.

John saw two sickles. The first was held by the one like the Son of man, a reference to Jesus Christ, while the second was held by the Angel of Vintage (my revelation). Jesus harvests wheat, while the angel harvests grapes. In the wheat harvest, the Threshing Angel signaled that it was time for Christ to harvest the wheat. In the grape harvest, as we shall see, another angel calls out to the Angel of Vintage to harvest the grapes of the earth.

It may seem strange that two parties are required to do the job. Did Jesus not know when to harvest the wheat? Was the timing of this event hidden from Him until an angel informed Him? In the grape harvest, the Angel of Vintage too did not seem to know what to do or when to do it until a different angel told him to do his job.

But the simple answer to this is that this arrangement sets forth the law of the double witness. When two entities are involved in an important act or in a decree, it satisfies the requirement of the law, which in turn is the expression of God's nature. If this were not so, then we might expect God to issue His own decrees from heaven that would bring changes to the earth, when, in fact, He requires an earthly witness—a voice responding from the earth—to establish all things.

Unity in Marriage

The core principle behind this arrangement is that to make a decree effective, agreement and unity are required. This was the underlying truth behind marriage that was established in [Gen. 2:24](#), and this same principle carries over to the great marriage between heaven and earth. Without this principle, marriage between two people would have been unnecessary. Each person singularly might have been complete.

When God created all things in Genesis 1, He pronounced each of them in turn “good,” and at the end He pronounced the whole creation “very good” ([Gen. 1:31](#)). But when God formed Adam in [Gen. 2:7](#), there is no such conclusion, because God's creation was not yet complete. After taking Eve out of Adam, God establishes unity, but still no final pronouncement is made, because there was still more to create. In fact, a long time of disunity and disagreement yet had to run its course before the reconciliation of all things was complete.

It is only at the end of time as we know it that heaven and earth come into full agreement in Christ, peace (*shalom*) is established, and God is then “*all in all*” ([1 Cor. 15:28](#)). In the broad sense, this completes this particular creation project of God. Without the reconciliation of all things, the creation would remain divided and fractured. Without such reconciliation, the goal of history would be Dualism, where good and evil, light and darkness coexist forever.

Dualism has been the basis of many religions, both past and present. Many have assumed that good and evil, light and darkness, heaven and hell, are each necessary for the other to exist. Their solution, then, is not to eradicate evil, but to separate it from the good. They view universal reconciliation as being impossible. There will always be darkness in some part of the universe in order to make it possible for light to exist in another part of the universe. There must be both heaven and hell for either to exist. Even God cannot exist apart from the devil, they say.

Scripture does teach that good and evil will be separated, but this in itself is not the final goal of history. The divine goal is marriage that is based on agreement and unity. The good overcomes the evil and eradicates the evil by restoring all of creation into one harmonious whole. The divine marriage between heaven and earth is a happy one.

All separation from God is temporary, because it is not the final solution in the divine plan. In the course of world history, heaven and earth have experienced a bad marriage, and this is pictured in God's marriage to Israel, which also ended up in divorce ([Jer. 3:8](#)).

However, Scripture differentiates between the two marriage covenants. Old Covenant marriages between carnal people, are characterized by disagreement (more or less) and even failure. For this reason the law allows for divorce ([Deut. 24:1-4](#)). An Old Covenant marriage sets forth a master-slave relationship and idealizes obedience of the wife to the husband. But New Covenant marriage sets forth an equal relationship that idealizes agreement and unity between husband and wife, allowing them to be co-heirs ([1 Peter 3:7](#)).

When we understand the nature of God and realize that His goal is reconciliation, unity, and agreement for all of creation, then we may shed the Dualistic mindset. The divine goal is not to establish “heaven and hell” for men to exist forever, but to bring all of creation under the feet of Christ ([1 Cor. 15:25](#)) in a perfect marriage relationship.

This is the foundational mindset of the God of the Bible that is behind the need for two angels to establish the harvests in Revelation 14. Each angel has its own unique role to play. It is not that the Son of man has no sense of timing as to when the wheat harvest should take place, but that an angel has been set up with the word of timing, much like a watchman in the temple who looks for the dawn or for the first crescent moon at sundown.

Every person and every angel has been assigned a calling or function, and it is in the loving nature of the Heavenly Manager not to bypass them in the fulfillment of their responsibilities. Hence also God uses men and women in the establishment of His will in the earth, when He certainly has the power to do it all by Himself.

Authority and the Double Witness

Herein do we see the importance of authority. Even though God is sovereign, He has chosen to create authority, which is a limited and subordinate form of sovereignty. The purpose of authority is to fulfill God’s desire (nature) for a double witness, without which any unity remains untested and therefore unreal. Yet authority was never given a position or power equal to God’s sovereignty, otherwise the will of God would always remain in doubt, for it would depend upon the response of those in authority.

The creation of authority in the earth has confused many into thinking that God created *free will*, when in fact, He created *authority*. Free will is a philosophical concept, and the term is not used in Scripture, nor is it advocated. Scripture presents authority as a principle of *spiritual law*, not philosophical free will of the carnal mind.

Authority is limited by very definition. Those limits are defined by time. Time was built into creation in order to subject man’s authority to God’s sovereignty and to limit man’s time of disunity and disagreement. The first large span of time is this 7,000 year period leading to the Great White Throne judgment. Men are given 7,000 years in which to exercise their God-given authority to choose between agreement or disagreement. Then everything changes when all who are yet in disagreement are issued an arrest warrant, and the angels gather them before the Great White Throne for judgment.

At that point, the law removes the authority that they had enjoyed previously, and sentences them to a time of slavery. Slaves do not have authority. They are required to obey the will of their masters, and if they should assert their “free will,” they are coerced (by pain, if necessary) into giving up their rebellious ideas of “freedom.”

Most people understand the idea of slavery from the manner in which it has been practiced in the earth, and for this reason we tend to recoil at the idea of slavery. Biblical slavery is different, because it is established by a God of love, and so it requires slave masters to take responsibility for their slaves in much the same manner that fathers are required to train their children in the principles of righteousness.

Hence, when the sinners (former unbelievers) are sentenced at the Great White Throne to a life of slavery by law ([Exodus 22:3](#)), the overcomers who redeem their debts are given authority and responsibility in equal measure. The overcomers are responsible to train their slaves in the ways of God, so that when the Creation Jubilee arrives, and creation itself experiences the freedom of the sons of God ([Rom. 8:21](#)), they will all be in full agreement with the divine nature.

The Angel of Fire

[Revelation 14:17, 18](#) says,

¹⁷ And another angel [of Vintage] came out of the temple which is in heaven, and he also had a sharp sickle. ¹⁸ And another angel [of Fire], the one who has power [*exousia*, “authority”] over fire, came out from the altar; and he called with a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, “Put in your sharp sickle, and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth, because her grapes are ripe.”

Both of these angels are temple angels. The Angel of Vintage “*came out of the temple*,” and the Angel of Fire “*came out from the altar*.” This second angel is the same one seen in [Ezekiel 10:2](#),

² And He spoke to the man clothed in linen and said, “Enter between the whirling wheels under the cherubim, and fill your hands with the coals of fire from between the cherubim, and scatter them over the city.” And he entered in my sight.

Angels are often called “men” when they take the appearance of men. This Angel of Fire took coals from the altar of incense in the temple of heaven and scattered them onto the earth. The altar of incense is the place of intercession ([Rev. 5:8](#)). The “fire,” then is scattered onto the earth in answer to prayer. This “fire” is designed to burn chaff and to purify gold and silver. Its purpose is to judge sin and thereby purify the earth by the baptism of fire. Thus, the fire represents the work of the Holy Spirit, who works within our hearts to purify us of carnality and disagreement.

This is also the work of the Angel of Fire in [Rev. 14:18](#), though the metaphor changes to the theme of harvest. The “sharp sickle” is used to gather the grapes together for judgment at the Great White Throne. It pictures metaphorically what is stated later in [Rev. 20:12](#), “*And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened.*”

Those unbelievers (or really, ex-unbelievers) will then be “*thrown into the lake of fire*” by the authority assigned to the Angel of Fire. The fire speaks of the divine nature, for God is “*a consuming fire*” ([Deut. 4:24](#)). Man was created to reflect that fire (glory) in the earth. The Hebrew word *esh* (*alef* and *shin*) means “fire.” The word *ish* (“man, male”) is *esh* with a *yood* between the *alef* and the *shin*. Because the *yood* literally means a hand and signifies one’s works, we can see that man was created to do all of his works in the midst of the fire of God.

The Angel of Fire is assigned to bring all men into the purpose for which they were created—by judgment, if necessary—burning out the chaff by the baptism of fire ([Matt. 3:11](#)).

The Wine Press

[Revelation 14:19](#) says,

¹⁹ And the angel [of Vintage] swung his sickle to the earth, and gathered the clusters from the vine of the earth, and threw them into the great wine press of the wrath of God.

The fiery judgment coming from the Angel of Fire is synergistic with the “winepress” as well. Even as the previous sickle reaped the wheat (believers), so also does this second sickle reap the grapes (unbelievers). They are then cast into the winepress of God in order to extract the new wine from them for God’s Communion Table. Wine was normally trodden under foot to separate the flesh from the juice. So all things are put under the feet of Christ ([1 Cor. 15:27](#)), not to destroy the grape company, but so that God may be “*all in all*.”

The purpose of divine judgment is to discard fleshly disagreement, in order to establish unity between heaven and earth. Using a sickle to reap wheat is normal, but to use a sickle to reap grapes is abnormal. This unusual metaphor suggests *finality*. The plants themselves are being cut down by the sickle, preventing any further growth. In other words, because the plants themselves have been cut down, the earth will no longer produce unbelievers.

The “wrath of God” ([Rev. 14:19](#)) cannot be understood apart from a Hebrew mindset. There are two Greek words translated “wrath,” and these correlate with two Hebrew words. The Greek word used in [Rev. 14:19](#) is *thumos*, “intense passion that is inspired by breath.” It correlates with the Hebrew word *aph*, “nostril, face, breath” that is released through *thumos*, “intense heat, passion.” When God breathed into Adam’s nostrils the breath of life ([Gen. 2:7](#)), the word *aph* is translated “nostrils.” God did not breathe life into Adam out of anger, but out of His passion.

God’s “wrath” is His PASSION, which is an emotion that can be expressed as anger, love, jealousy, or in other “heated” ways. The point is that *thumos* must be understood in terms of *God’s* nature, not man’s, and *His* purpose, not man’s. In this case, His passion, based on love, is to bring the earth into unity and agreement, so that heaven and earth can be married, so to speak. But to accomplish this goal, He brings judgment—even appearing in “wrath”—in order to make this happen.

The other Greek word translated “wrath” is *orge*, whose Hebrew equivalent is *chemah*, “breath, heat, to burn red hot.” In English we derive our word “orgy” from *orge*, which, though it has some negative connotations, does not normally indicate anger, but intense passion. Hence, this word too means God’s Passion.

God is passionate enough about His creation to labor unceasingly until His purpose for creation has been accomplished. John uses the term *orge* five times in the book of Revelation, including [Rev. 16:19](#), “*And Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath.*” In this case, God expresses His passion by anger against Babylon, because He is passionate about setting the creation free. It is a *divine orgy*, so to speak.

So also we read in [Rev. 14:20 \(NASB\)](#),

²⁰ And the wine press was trodden outside the city, and blood came out from the wine press, up to the horses’ bridles, for a distance of two hundred miles.

If this were literal, there would not be enough blood in the entire world of humanity to fill up a valley 200 miles long to the height of a horse’s bridle. Obviously, John was still speaking in metaphoric language. A better translation is given in *The Emphatic Diaglott*:

²⁰ And the wine-press was trodden outside of the city; and blood came forth out of the wine-press, even to the bridles of the horses, a thousand six hundred furlongs off.

This translation preserves the original numbers (1600 furlongs) and thereby helps us understand the meaning of this through the biblical meaning of numbers. The number 16 is the biblical number of love, and when multiplied by 100 suggests the fulness of love. This is consistent with the underlying meaning of *thumos*, “passion.” And so, no matter how violent the wine press appears to be, the ultimate goal of God’s passion is to reconcile through judgments, not to destroy or lose any part of creation.

The unnamed “city” in this case can be seen either as Babylon or as Jerusalem, which are equated spiritually in [Rev. 11:8](#).

Chapter 15: The Song of the Overcomers

[Revelation 15:1](#) says,

¹ And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels who had the seven plagues, which are the last, because in them the wrath of God is finished.

John did not just receive a revelatory word about this. He “*saw another sign in heaven.*” This sign indicates that there is a sign in the heavens which consists of seven angels *in the stars*. This correlates with [Rev. 1:20](#), which says, “*the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches.*” So John saw the angels of the seven churches come with bowls containing the seven last plagues upon Babylon.

The seven stars in heaven are the Pleiades, whose brightest star is Al Debaran, "the Leader, or Governor." Another bright star is Al Cyone, "The Center," whose Hebrew name is Succoth, "Tabernacles."

Those seven plagues are pictured as bowls of wine in Revelation 16. We will soon correlate these more closely when we study that chapter. However, knowing this connection helps us understand chapter 15, because it puts this chapter into the context of the seven churches and the overcomers who are called out of each church.

The Overcomers

[Revelation 15:2](#) says,

² And I saw, as it were, a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who had come off victorious [*nikao*] from the beast and from his image and from the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, holding harps of God.

The Greek word *nikao*, here translated “*had come off victorious,*” is the same word used of the overcomers in the message to the seven churches. This, then, is the body of overcomers who stand on the “*sea of glass mixed with fire.*” Collectively, they have a job to do at the end of the age in bringing the seven final “plagues” upon Mystery Babylon.

Yet they also bring a positive message, showing that the overthrow of Babylon is not an end in itself, but the means of saving all the nations and incorporating them into the Stone Kingdom which “*filled the whole earth,*” as [Dan. 2:35](#) tells us. In other words, it is man’s oppressive system of law and government that is overthrown and replaced by the law of God and the rule of the overcomers under Jesus Christ, the King. When this happens, the psalmist tells us, the nations will “*be glad and sing for joy, for Thou wilt judge the peoples with uprightness, and guide the nations on the earth*” ([Psalm 67:4](#)).

[Revelation 15:3, 4](#) continues,

³ And they sang the song of Moses the bond-servant of God and the song of the Lamb, saying, “Great and marvelous are Thy works, O Lord God, the Almighty, Righteous and true are Thy ways, Thou King of the nations. ⁴ Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? For Thou alone art holy; for all the nations will come and worship before Thee, for Thy righteous acts have been revealed.”

Do the overcomers sing two songs? Is the song of Moses different from the song of the Lamb? Or are we to understand that this is one song entitled: *The Song of Moses and the Song of the Lamb*? To know this, we must go back to Deuteronomy and study the song of Moses.

The Song of Moses

On the day that Moses commissioned Joshua to lead Israel in his place, Moses wrote a prophetic song. [Deut. 31:22, 23](#) says,

²² So Moses wrote this song the same day, and taught it to the sons of Israel. ²³ Then he commissioned Joshua the son of Nun, and said, “Be strong and courageous, for you shall bring the sons of Israel into the land which I swore to them, and I will be with you.”

Since Joshua (or Yeshua) was a type of Christ leading Israel into the Promised Land, this song was not about Moses, but about Joshua and His calling. By extension, it is also about Jesus, the Yeshua of the New Testament. And yet, because Joshua was of Ephraim, while Jesus was of Judah in His first appearance, this song really applies to the present time, because it is only in His second appearance that He comes as Ephraim (or Joseph) to lead us into the Promised Land.

In His second appearance, He comes as a New Creation Man, where He is the Head, and the overcomers are His body. Hence, the “song of the Lamb” is the song of the *arnion*, the term Jesus used when He told Peter, “*tend my lambs*” ([John 21:15](#)). The *arnion* is the completed Christ body, where neither functions without the other. It is distinct from Jesus by Himself, who is called the Lamb (*amnos*) in [John 1:29](#), [36](#), [Acts 8:32](#), and in [1 Peter 1:19](#).

We may conclude, then, that the body of overcomers who come forth in Revelation 15 participate in the second work of Christ, serving under their Head—Jesus Christ. Even as Joshua was commissioned to overthrow the Canaanite nations with the help of the body of Israelites, so does Jesus overthrow Babylon with the help of the overcomers in Revelation 15. Perhaps the main difference is that Joshua conquered Canaan by an Old Covenant sword, while the overcomers conquer Babylon by the greater sword of the New Covenant.

Likewise, the song of Moses laments Israel’s corruption in his day, for after commissioning Joshua, we read in [Deut. 31:24–27](#),

²⁴ And it came about, when Moses finished writing the words of this law in a book until they were complete, ²⁵ that Moses commanded the Levites who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord, saying, ²⁶ “Take this book of the law and place it beside the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it remain there as a witness against you. ²⁷ For I know your rebellion and your stubbornness, behold, while I am still alive with you today, you have been rebellious against the Lord; how much more, then, after my death?

In other words, the song of Moses—and, by extension, the entire law of God—was to stand as a witness against the nation on account of its rebellious heart. Within the song itself, Moses writes in [Deut. 32:5](#), “*They have acted corruptly toward Him...*”[and] “*are a perverse and crooked generation.*” Moses prophesies also that Israel would provoke God to jealousy (vs. 16–21). Yet in the end, Moses concluded his song with a brief glimpse of the end of the story. [Deut. 32:43](#) says,

⁴³ Rejoice, O nations, with His people; for He will avenge the blood of His servants, and will render vengeance on His adversaries, and will atone for His land and His people.

In other words, the realistic pessimism of Moses would end with rejoicing, not only in Israel, but in all the nations. The reason for this is hinted in the song itself, where Moses speaks of the faithfulness of God ([Deut. 32:4](#)). This is clarified by the New Covenant, where God vows to change the rebellious hearts of men so that He may be their God, and they may be His people. The song of the Lamb, then, may be seen as an addendum or a second song that expands upon the faithfulness of God and His ability to save all nations, even through much judgment.

This song proved to be Moses’ last word to Israel, for we read in [Deut. 32:48–50](#),

⁴⁸ And the Lord spoke to Moses that very same day, saying, ⁴⁹ Go up to this mountain of Abarim, Mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab opposite Jericho, and look at the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the sons of Israel for a possession. ⁵⁰ Then die on the mountain where you ascend, and be gathered to your people, as Aaron your brother died on Mount Hor and was gathered to his people.

For a more complete study of the song of Moses, see [Deuteronomy, the Second Law, Book 10, Final Prophecies](#).

The Song of the Lamb

Perhaps the “song” in [Rev. 15:3, 4](#) is meant to be seen as a short addendum to the song of Moses. It shows the triumph of the New Covenant and how “*all the nations will come and worship before Thee*” on account of His “*righteous acts*.” Those acts of God take the form of judgment upon the nations (“Babylon”). In particular, these judgments reach a climax with the seven last plagues, brought into the earth by the angels of the seven churches.

The main message of this song is to show that the judgments being poured out upon Babylon will have a happy outcome, not only for the few but for the many. All nations will glorify His name and worship Him for His “*great and marvelous*” works. The outcome will not be as it was with the land of Canaan, which Israel conquered by the sword of the Old Covenant. Under the Old Covenant, the law has no recourse but to bring death and destruction. But under the New Covenant, the law is satisfied by the blood of “*the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world*” ([John 1:29](#)).

The overcomers are the only ones who knew (or understood) the words of the new song in [Rev. 14:3](#), and this is probably the same as the song of the Lamb in [Rev. 15:2, 3](#). The song is about the New Covenant and God’s ability to save *all the nations* in the Restoration of All Things.

Most Christians, not fully understanding the New Covenant by which they claim salvation for themselves, do not believe that God is truly able to save all mankind. They believe that man’s will is too strong, and that God is unable to turn the hearts of most men. They also believe that the death of a sinner is a deadline for salvation, and that even when every knee bows to Him at the Great White Throne, it is all for naught, for it is “too late” for them to be saved.

Such a song would be even more pessimistic than the song that Moses sang, for at least Moses knew that all nations would rejoice in the end, even if he did not fully understand how God would do this. But the overcomers pictured in [Rev. 15:2](#) stand upon the “sea of glass” in a position of perfect rest. They hold “harps of God,” because they sing a heavenly song by divine revelation of truth that is unknown to most people on earth.

Chapter 16: The Temple Opened and Glorified

[Revelation 15:5](#), [6](#) says,

⁵ After these things I looked, and the temple of the tabernacle of testimony in heaven was opened, ⁶ and the seven angels who had the seven plagues came out of the temple, clothed in linen, clean and bright, and girded around their breasts with golden girdles.

After seeing the overcomers standing on the sea of glass (i.e., the laver), John then sees the heavenly temple “opened” by an unseen hand, and he sees the angels of the seven churches stepping forth to pour out their bowls of wine. Since the seven churches are pictured in [Rev. 1:20](#) as the “stars” or lamps on the lampstand in the temple, it follows that their angels would be in the temple until called upon to fulfill their prophetic responsibility.

The scene of the seven bowls gives us the meaning of the prophetic side of the feast of Tabernacles, particularly the seven drink offerings that were offered during that week. At the feast of Tabernacles, the priests set up four huge lampstands in the outer court, each 50 cubits high, bringing the light out from the temple to the people—and even to the entire city. So also John tells us that the temple was opened, and the seven angels (“stars” on the lampstand in [Rev. 1:20](#)) came out of the heavenly temple into the earth (i.e., the “outer court”).

Water and Light

The feast of Tabernacles was first of all a harvest festival at the end of the growing season. It was a time of rejoicing as the people thanked God for the rain necessary to bring in a harvest. The rain also signified the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, as the prophets had foretold. For this reason, they sent a priest daily during the feast with a silver pitcher of water to get water from the Pool of Siloam, which they poured out as a drink offering at the altar, along with wine.

Secondly, in the evening they set up four huge lampstands in the Court of the Women, each having four fires, for a total of sixteen lamps. Four is the biblical number of the earthly creation, and sixteen is the number of love. Therefore, this prophetically signified the love of God sending out light to the entire creation to fulfill the Abrahamic calling. The light from the lampstand that was normally hidden in the temple was brought out for the whole world to see and to enjoy.

Of course, Revelation 16 also correlates with the 16th Hebrew letter, *ayin*, which means “an eye,” and signifies *seeing, looking for, or manifestation*. This letter has a numeric value of 70, which means “restoration of all nations.” Hence, the fall of Babylon, while negative from the perspective of evil men, is meant to restore the nations out of God’s heart of love at the time of the manifestation of the sons of God.

The Ephods

Until now, we have been given no description of these seven angels, other than that they were identified with the seven stars. But here now we see them “*clothed in linen, clean and bright*” and having “*golden girdles*.” A footnote in The Emphatic Diaglott says that one manuscript reads *lithon* (“stone”) instead of *linon* (“linen”).

Since the texts differ, it is helpful to see that Panin’s Numeric English New Testament says the angels were “*arrayed with precious stone pure, bright, and girt about their breasts with golden girdles*.” Panin studied the numeric values of each word, sentence, paragraph, and book of the New Testament in order to discern which readings were “inspired” according to the internal numbering system. In using the word “stone” here, he says that this word preserves the inspired numbers built into the text.

Hence, we are to understand that these angels were described as being adorned with pure, bright *precious stones*, with “linen” garments only implied. In other words, these angels each wear an ephod, like the high priests wore in ancient

times ([Exodus 28:15–21](#)). The ephod contained four rows of precious stones with three stones in each row signifying the twelve tribes of Israel.

[Exodus 28:15](#) calls this ephod “*a breastplate of judgment*,” signifying that the one wearing it was called as a judge to administer justice to the twelve tribes. The high priest, of course, was to render God’s judgment, rather than his own opinions. Though many high priests in Israel’s history failed to administer justice properly, the seven angels administer perfect justice. They are pictured wearing ephods first to establish their spiritual authority and secondly to inform us that their justice is “pure” and in accord with the will and mind of God.

The Seven Bowls

[Revelation 15:7](#) says,

⁷ And one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God, who lives forever and ever.

We are not told which of the four living creatures supplied the golden bowls, but we do know that the four living creatures (lion, man, bull, eagle) represent the four leading tribes of Israel around the throne (Tabernacle) in particular, and all of creation in general. Hence, by their participation in this judicial process, the four living creatures approve of this divine judgment, for they are in agreement with the Lamb on the throne ([Rev. 5:8, 14](#)).

This correlates with the fact that the 15th chapter of Revelation manifests the 15th letter of the Hebrew alphabet, the *samech*, “a prop, or support,” or in this case, a double witness.

The picture emerges, then, of the seven angels stepping forth after the divine decree has been spoken. The four living creatures respond with their usual “Amen,” and equip the seven angels with each particular judgment that they are to decree in the earth. Each ministry supports the others in perfect harmony, ensuring that the word of God will be fulfilled.

The seven bowls are from the feast of Tabernacles, where seven bowls of wine were poured out as drink offerings, along with seven pitchers of water, into the two pipes, one on either side of the brazen altar. John mentions only “*seven golden bowls, full of the wrath of God*,” not distinguishing between the water and the wine. Perhaps this is because the offering of water was not specifically commanded by Moses in his instructions in Numbers 29. Perhaps it was understood in the plural term, “drink offerings” ([Num. 29:21, 24, 27](#), etc.). Or this may have been a later revelation that was added when the prophets spoke about the outpouring of the Spirit ([Isaiah 32:15](#); [Joel 2:28](#); [Ezekiel 36:25–28](#)).

Whatever happened, the combination of water and wine served to show that the coming judgment upon the nations was to be accompanied by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The combination of these two factors are necessary to fulfill the divine plan to establish the Kingdom of God upon the earth.

The Circuit around the Altar

On each day of the feast of Tabernacles, the priests marched in procession around the altar of sacrifice, singing (from [Psalm 118:25](#)), “*O then, now work salvation, Jehovah! O Jehovah, give prosperity!*” But on the seventh day of Tabernacles, they marched around the altar seven times. These circuits were done to remember how Jericho had fallen when Israel first came into the land of Canaan. [Joshua 6:3, 4](#) gives those instructions, saying,

³ And you shall march around the city, all the men of war circling the city once. You shall do so for six days. ⁴ ... then on the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times ...

The fall of Jericho prefigured the fall of Babylon, so we must read Revelation 16 in the light of Joshua’s account. Both must be understood in the light of the common temple practice in Jesus’ day, with which John was so familiar. As we

will see, the fall of Babylon comes at the end of the seventh bowl poured out in [Rev. 16:17–19](#). In fact, the metaphorical “earthquake” that destroys Babylon suggests that an actual physical quake may have shook Jericho, collapsing its walls.

The Seven Prophetic Psalms

While the priests were pouring out the seven drink offerings (water and wine) at the feast of Tabernacles, they sang prophetic psalms. Each day they sang a different psalm. These are given to us by Alfred Edersheim in his book, [The Temple](#), toward the end of chapter 14.

Day 1. Psalm 105

Day 2. Psalm 29

Day 3. [Psalm 50:16](#) on

Day 4. [Psalm 94:16](#) on

Day 5. [Psalm 94:8–15](#)

Day 6. [Psalm 81:6](#) on

Day 7. [Psalm 82:5](#) on

These psalms are the basis of John’s revelation of the events in each of the seven bowls poured out upon Babylon in Revelation 16. We will study each of them in turn in our study of chapter 16.

The Temple Filled with His Glory

[Revelation 15:8](#) says,

⁸ And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power; and no one was able to enter the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished.

When the glory of God filled Solomon’s temple, a similar event occurred. [2 Chron. 5:11–14](#) says,

¹¹ And when the priests came forth from the holy place... ¹² and all the Levitical singers... and with them one hundred and twenty priests blowing trumpets ¹³ in unison when the trumpeters and the singers were to make themselves heard with one voice to praise and to glorify the Lord... and when they praised the Lord saying, “He indeed is good for His lovingkindness is everlasting,” then the house, the house of the Lord, was filled with a cloud, ¹⁴ so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled the house of God.

The glorification of the temple involved 120 priests coming into harmony with the singers at the feast of *Tabernacles*. Years later, on the day of *Pentecost* in Acts 2, the Spirit filled a gathering of 120 disciples ([Acts 1:15](#)), who formed the beginning of a new temple made of living stones. They too had a hard time standing on their feet, and some thought they were drunk ([Acts 2:13–15](#)).

Solomon’s temple, of course, was destroyed by the Babylonians on account of the sins of Judah and the priests of Jerusalem. The glory had departed just before this destruction ([Ezekiel 11:23](#)), moving to the Mount of Olives. When the Judahites returned from Babylon and built the second temple, the glory did not fill that place, for it had been forsaken “*as Shiloh*,” where the name *Ichabod* was written.

Jesus took that glory to heaven when He ascended from the Mount of Olives ([Acts 1:10–12](#)). Ten days later, the glory returned and filled His new Pentecostal temple. But Pentecost, being a leavened feast, could not endure, nor could it bring in perfection, so we see the Holy Spirit come and go many times in the various “Holy Spirit revivals” during the Pentecostal Age. Each had a good start, but soon ended.

It is not until [Rev. 15:8](#) that the temple of God is filled again. This comes in the context of the feast of Tabernacles and the manifestation of the sons of God, who are the overcomers.

We read that “*no one was able to enter the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished.*” What does it mean to enter the temple? Why are the priests unable to perform their duties while the smoke remains in the temple? How does this situation prophesy of the present time?

These are questions that the Scriptures do not address directly, but if we correlate the seven “plagues” (bowls) with the seven days of Tabernacles, it appears that even though the temple was opened on the first day of Tabernacles, the overcomers will have to wait until the eighth day of the feast to be presented to God in the temple in heaven.

This, of course, is in accordance with the law of Sonship found in [Exodus 22:29, 30](#),

²⁹ You shall not delay the offering from your harvest and your vintage. The first-born of your sons you shall give to Me. ³⁰ You shall do the same with your oxen and with your sheep. It shall be with its mother seven days; on the eighth day you shall give it to Me.

Whereas the overcomers (“first-born”) are brought to birth on the first day of Tabernacles, they must wait for an entire week, because they cannot be presented to God until the eighth day.

Book 6

A study of Revelation 16.

Chapter 1: The Bowls Poured Out

The stage has finally been set for the overthrow of Babylon. The judgment of Babylon and the subsequent healing of the nations both come after the temple in heaven is opened. Seven angels are released, bringing the final seven “plagues” upon the beast systems. The last verse in Revelation 15 introduces us to these seven angels. [Revelation 15:8](#) says,

⁸ And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power; and no one was able to enter the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished.

A similar situation occurred twice before. The first was when the glory of God filled the Tabernacle of Moses. [Exodus 40:34](#), [35](#) says,

³⁴ Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. ³⁵ And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.

The second occasion was when the glory of God filled Solomon’s temple. [2 Chron. 7:1](#), [2](#) says,

¹ Now when Solomon had finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the Lord filled the house. ² And the priests could not enter into the house of the Lord, because the glory of the Lord filled the Lord’s house.

This is repeated in [1 Kings 8:10](#), [11](#) with no new information. It appears that the priests were able to minister in the temple after the seven days of the feast of Tabernacles were completed. But since the glory of God seemed to interrupt the temple activity, they decided to keep a second week of Tabernacles ([1 Kings 8:65](#)). No doubt this second week was observed in a more “normal” manner insofar as temple rituals were concerned.

The prohibition against entering the temple is repeated, then, in [Rev. 15:8](#), in terms of the overcomers entering the temple in heaven. But this time we are given a brief explanation. Those destined to enter the temple in heaven would have to wait “*until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished.*” The original reason under Moses and Solomon was that the “glory” had filled the temple.

So in some manner, the “glory” is an equivalent to the “seven plagues.” The glory of God always overwhelms the flesh, for it is also revealed as the fire of God and the baptism of fire. Such “fire” kills the flesh, and only those whose flesh is already dead are able to survive in the presence of His glory.

The seven plagues are directed against the rulers of Babylon who stand in opposition to the will of God. But the overcomers too are unable to enter the temple in heaven until this work is completed. For them, it is necessary to keep the law of Sonship in [Exodus 22:29](#), [30](#) and wait until the eighth day to be presented to God.

The Loud Voice

[Revelation 16:1](#) says,

¹ And I heard a loud voice from the temple, saying to the seven angels, “Go and pour out the seven bowls of the wrath of God into the earth.”

The voice is really telling us that the time has come to overthrow Babylon by fulfilling the feast of Tabernacles. It takes longer than a single week to overthrow such a mighty city, so we might expect this to be fulfilled in a longer “week” than just seven literal days. So let us step back and look at the broad context of this chapter.

Revelation 14 took us to the end of the “seven times” of beast dominion (2014–2017). The beast from the sea had sole dominion for 1,260 years starting 529–534 and ending 1789–1794. This beast was then “killed” in 1798 and then came back to life in 1804, making an alliance with the beast from the earth that was rising at the same time. John does not tell us how long these allied forces would continue their dominion, but we may presume that their time would end when the overall “seven times” ends. This is prophecy regarding the beast systems.

The Transition

Meanwhile, the time of the seven churches extends for a period of 40 Jubilees (33 to 1993), with the Laodicean “captivity” church era taking up the final portion of the reign of “Saul” from 1914 to 1993. We then began a transition period from Saul to David, based on the pattern seen in [2 Sam. 5:5](#),

⁵ At Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years over all Israel and Judah.

This 7½ year transition was fulfilled from May 30, 1993 until Nov. 30, 2000. It began on Pentecost of 1993, the anniversary of the fulfillment of Pentecost in Acts 2. On this anniversary, my wife and I went to a conference in Nashville, TN to present ourselves (hearts) as Pentecostal offerings on behalf of all overcomers. We asked God for the baptism of fire (the Holy Spirit) to “bake” our leavened bread ([Lev. 23:17](#)) in order to make us acceptable living sacrifices ([Rom. 12:1](#)).

This and other events marked the start of the 7½ year transition from Saul to David. We were shown by the prophetic word that the overcomers as a whole, representing “David,” had been given their first installment of spiritual authority. The church under Pentecost had failed to bring righteousness into the earth, and so this mandate was passed to the overcomers with a Tabernacles anointing.

Shortly after “Saul” died in May 1993, God instructed us to engage in the Jubilee Prayer Campaign from Nov. 21–29, 1993, which was the 46th anniversary of the time in 1947 when the United Nations debated the Palestinian Resolution. We were shown from [Dan. 4:32](#) that this would actually be a seven-year time of spiritual warfare, ending Nov. 29, 2000. All of this warfare was accomplished by the *limited authority* given to us, much like David’s limited authority in Hebron.

Our warfare, then, would reach its climax on Nov. 29, 2000, which was the day before the 7½ year transition was due to end. The coincidence of these two dates, November 29 and 30 in the year 2000, was remarkable.

In [2 Sam. 5:5](#) we read that the original transition was marked by the locations of David’s capital city. He reigned 7½ years in Hebron, and then, toward the end of this time period, representatives from all the tribes of Israel came to crown him king of all Israel ([2 Sam. 5:3](#)). Only then did David conquer Jerusalem. It was his first accomplishment after receiving the *full authority* that God had promised him.

David’s pattern was repeated prophetically in the year 2000. At the feast of Tabernacles that year, which we held in Champaign, IL, we understood that the overcomers (representing “David”) were being crowned with the full authority promised to them. A month later, on Nov. 28–30, 2000, a prophetic meeting was called, in which God revealed that His purpose was to mark the time of David’s conquest of Jerusalem. It was time for him to move his capital from Hebron to Jerusalem, and in like manner, on Nov. 30, 2000 we decreed that the capital of the Kingdom would be moved from the Old Jerusalem to the New.

The way it unfolded for us showed us that Nov. 29, 2000 was the time when the earthly Jerusalem was overthrown, and November 30 was the establishment of the New Jerusalem as the capital of the overcomers' Tabernacles Kingdom. Most importantly, however, was the transfer of authority from the church ("Saul") to the overcomers ("David").

This marked the shift from Pentecost to Tabernacles as well, insofar as the mandate was concerned. Over a period of 40 Jubilees (or 1,960 years), Pentecost had proved itself to be inadequate in fulfilling its mandate to establish the Kingdom. So even as David replaced Saul, so also the overcomers, having a greater anointing through the feast of Tabernacles, replaced the church under Pentecost.

Overview of the Seven Bowls (2000–2006/2007 A.D.)

We were then led to pour out seven bowls of water and wine at each feast of Tabernacles from the year 2000 until the seventh bowl in 2006. This was based on Revelation 16, each year having a different purpose according to John's revelation. During this time, we saw remarkable signs and wonders that proved that we were indeed being led by the Spirit.

Having learned that the ancient feast of Tabernacles saw both water and wine poured out on each of the seven days of Tabernacles, we too poured out both water and wine to symbolize the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (water) and the overthrow of Babylon (wine). Our work was confirmed also by overlaying the eight miracle signs in the gospel of John, which prophesy of the eight days of Tabernacles.

The feast of Tabernacles was a seven-day feast, but there was a final "*great day of the feast*" where the people gathered in a holy convocation on the eighth day. Hence, the first seven miracle-signs occurred before Jesus' death and resurrection, while the last sign occurred after His resurrection. These signs gave much meaning to our Tabernacles work from 2000–2006, with 2007 then representing the eighth day of Tabernacles.

The seven bowls of wine are the judgment side of prophecy, for they are "plagues" directed against Babylon. The seven bowls of water are the positive side of prophecy, for they signify the outpouring of the Holy Spirit which establishes the Kingdom of God in the earth. The water, then, is the drink offering poured out during the seven days of the feast of Tabernacles in the old temple.

In John's gospel, each day of the feast of Tabernacles is depicted by a *semeion*, a miracle-sign that John presents in his gospel. There are eight signs in John's gospel, one for each of the eight days of the feast of Tabernacles. Of these, the first seven were performed before the cross, while the eighth sign occurred after Christ's resurrection.

The eight signs in John are as follows:

1. [John 2:1–11](#) (at the marriage feast of Cana)
2. [John 4:46–54](#) (the Nobleman's son healed)
3. [John 5:1–13](#) (The sick man at Bethesda healed)
4. [John 6:4–15](#) (Feeding the 5,000)
5. [John 6:16–21](#) (Walking on the water)
6. [John 9:1–7](#) (The blind man healed)
7. [John 11:1–44](#) (Lazarus raised from the dead)
8. [John 21:3–11](#) (The 153 fish caught in the net)

The purpose of these “signs” was to manifest His glory ([John 2:11](#)). That is also the purpose of the feast of Tabernacles, which prophesies of the transformation of the saints to a glorified body. By linking these eight signs with the feast of Tabernacles, we see that the water that was poured out for seven days prophesied of the work of the Holy Spirit.

We were led to pour out bowls of water and wine from 2000–2006, believing that we were establishing prophetic decrees at the appointed times. The full story is far too long and complex to repeat here, but anyone can read the summary of events in my book, [The Wars of the Lord: A Short History of Spiritual Warfare in Our Time](#).

The seven bowls of water and wine were poured out at the following locations:

1. **Champaign, IL** (on the “earth”) October 22, 2000
2. **Port Austin, MI** (on the “sea,” Lake Huron) October 9, 2001
3. **Fridley, MN** (on the Mississippi “river”) September 27, 2002
4. **Chandler, AZ** (in the Valley of the “Sun”) October 17, 2003
5. **Washington D.C.** (on “the seat of the beast” at Scott Circle) October 6, 2004
6. **Fruita, CO** (on the “Euphrates River”) September 26, 2005
7. **Babylon, NY** (on “Mystery Babylon”) October 7, 2006

The seventh bowl of wine, was poured out in Babylon, NY, not at the feast of Tabernacles, but on the Day of Atonement. The following week, we drove to Reading, PA to hold our Tabernacles conference at the Abraham Lincoln hotel, signifying the freeing of Babylon’s slaves. There I rehearsed the progression of prophecy in regard to the seven bowls and told the people that we should expect to see the start of the collapse of the economic system within a year.

It was no surprise, then, when we began to hear of the subprime mortgage crisis that was reported in the mainstream media in June 2007. As the crisis deepened, it brought about the banking crisis of September 2008, triggering what is now known as “the Great Recession.”

While government propaganda tries to make it appear that all is well and that we have seen a “recovery,” the truth is that none of the underlying banking problems have been fixed. The banks were merely bailed out, so that they had sufficient money to continue the same practices that caused the original problems. The stock market was propped up artificially. Hence, the next collapse may be far greater.

The Rebuilt Temple

Another theme relevant to present-day prophecy is Haggai’s revelation about the glorification of the new temple. Recall that the glory left Solomon’s temple shortly before the Babylonians destroyed it. Jeremiah prophesied that the glory would depart from Jerusalem as it had departed from the tabernacle at “Shiloh” ([Jer. 7:12](#), [13](#), [14](#)) three centuries earlier. Ezekiel actually saw the glory depart from the temple in Jerusalem ([Ezekiel 10:4](#), [18](#); [11:23](#)).

After the Babylonian captivity, many of the captives returned to rebuild Jerusalem and to build a second temple. Haggai prophesied during that time, encouraging them to rebuild. He then prophesied in [Hag. 2:9](#),

9 “The latter glory of this house will be greater than the former,” says the Lord of hosts, “and in this place I shall give peace,” declares the Lord of hosts.

Of course, that second temple was not nearly as glorious as “the former” temple of Solomon. Later, when King Herod dismantled the temple and rebuilt it during the time of Christ, he made it somewhat comparable to Solomon’s temple.

However, the real issue was not about architecture, but about the glory of God. We know that the glory of God did not fill that second temple. Neither did it have the Ark of the Covenant, without which it would have been impossible for the glory to fill any earthly temple.

From a legal standpoint, God had forsaken Jerusalem as Shiloh. God's presence left Shiloh when the Ark of God was taken by the Philistines, and this was marked by the birth of Ichabod, whose name means "*the glory has departed*" ([1 Sam. 4:21, 22](#)). In similar fashion, the Ark of God was removed by Jeremiah and never returned to Jerusalem (in spite of some reports of it being buried in Jerusalem).

The point is that Haggai's prophecy was not fulfilled in that second temple, nor could it be. The temple that was to be glorified was one made of "*living stones*" ([1 Peter 2:5](#)), and "*built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone*" ([Eph. 2:20](#)). This temple was glorified in a Pentecostal sense in [Acts 2:4](#), but the church again lost the glory, along with the gifts of the Spirit when they stopped bringing forth the fruit of the Spirit.

Holy Spirit revivals brought the glory back in limited parcels and in limited locations thereafter during the Pentecostal Age. But since 1993, and more particularly since Nov. 30, 2000, the stage has been set for the return of the glory of God to fill a new temple in the Tabernacles Age.

The "seven times" law applies also to the desolation of the temple. The second temple was completed on March 15, 515 B.C. ([Ezra 6:15](#)). Haggai's prophecy of temple glorification did not occur when the temple was dedicated at Tabernacles that year ([Haggai 2:1](#)). Instead, it was deferred for "seven times" (2,520 years) until October 2006.

It is significant that this 2,520-year cycle ended at the time that we poured out the seventh bowl in Babylon, NY on Oct. 7, 2006.

Chapter 2: The Redemption Angel

The seven angels pouring out the seven bowls of wine each have their day. Their purpose is to fulfill the prophetic meaning of the drink offerings on one of the seven days of Tabernacles. Nowhere else in Scripture are the drink offerings explained prophetically, yet John reveals them with specific details. According to my own revelation, the seven angels are named as follows:

1. Redemption Angel
2. Cleansing Angel
3. Appearing of Sons Angel (or “the Angel of the Waters”)
4. All Consuming Breath Angel
5. Overcoming Flesh Angel
6. Angel of Pure Influence
7. Angel of the Approaching Fulness of God

[Rev. 16:1](#) identifies the seven bowls as containing “*the wrath of God*.” The previous verse ([Rev. 15:8](#)) identifies these judgments as “*the seven plagues*,” which links the event to the divine judgment upon Egypt when God redeemed Israel from the house of bondage. The main difference is that there were ten plagues upon Egypt, but only seven on Babylon.

Today, the word “plague” means sickness or disease. But the meaning is broader in Scripture, for when the plagues hit Egypt, most of them did not involve sickness. The plague of hail, for instance, had nothing to do with disease, nor did the plague of darkness for three days. These plagues were designed to change Pharaoh’s will, so that he would set Israel free. That, too, is the purpose for the seven plagues upon Babylon.

Redemption Laws

[Revelation 16:2](#) says,

² And the first angel went and poured out his bowl into the earth; and it became a loathsome and malignant sore upon the men who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped his image.

This “*loathsome and malignant sore*” is not literal. It is a spiritual disease that afflicts all who worship money—all who pursue wealth as a priority above the Kingdom of God. Such people are in bondage to the earth and to their own carnality.

In the beginning, when Adam and Eve sinned, God sold them to the earth because they were unable to pay their debt to the law. We know this, because a redeemer not only obtains a slave, but also is made responsible for the debt (“curse of the law”) incurred by that slave. God made the earth responsible for Adam’s curse in [Gen. 3:17](#), saying, “*Cursed is the ground because of you.*”

Then He shows in [Gen. 3:19](#) that the earth essentially *owned* Adam and would ultimately claim his body when he died. Nonetheless, God also provided redemption laws by which man could be redeemed by a near kinsman ([Lev. 25:48, 49](#)), thereby changing masters and allowing the slave to work for a kinsman who loves him ([Lev. 25:53](#)).

In the case of the Babylonian captivity, God sold His people to Babylon on account of their sin, and by extension their captivity lasted “seven times.” The release at the time of redemption is accomplished by the Redemption Angel at the end of the age.

The Angel of Redemption is obviously called to redeem the people of God from Babylon, according to the pattern established in the time of Moses. [Deut. 7:7, 8](#) says,

⁷ The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in numbers than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, ⁸ but because the Lord loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the Lord brought you out by a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

To redeem is to purchase property that has been sold to someone else, usually as payment on a debt. When Jesus died on the cross to redeem us from sin’s bondage, He paid a costly redemption price. He did not steal those people that He was redeeming. It was done in a lawful manner according to the laws of redemption.

So also, when God redeems His people from Babylon, He does not intend to steal them from the Babylonians, but to redeem them lawfully. [Deut. 7:8](#) also tells us that God redeemed Israel in order to fulfill His oath, and this verse shows us that redemption was part of the New Covenant.

The redemption from Babylon was foretold in [Isaiah 48:20](#),

²⁰ Go forth from Babylon! Flee from the Chaldeans! Declare with the sound of joyful shouting, proclaim this, send it out to the end of the earth; say, “The Lord has redeemed His servant Jacob.”

Essentially, Isaiah was prophesying of the events in Revelation 16, beginning with the first angel, the Redemption Angel.

Day 1: Psalm 105

On the first day of Tabernacles, at the time when the priest poured out the bowls of water and wine at the altar, they sang Psalm 105. This psalm rehearses the history of Israel’s redemption when God sent the various plagues upon the land of Egypt. [Psalm 105:23](#) begins this section,

²³ Israel also came into Egypt; thus Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham... ²⁶ He sent Moses His servant, and Aaron whom He had chosen. ²⁷ They performed His wondrous acts among them, and miracles in the land of Ham. ²⁸ He sent darkness and ... ²⁹ He turned their waters into blood... ³⁰ Their land swarmed with frogs... ³¹ He spoke, and there came a swarm of flies and gnats in all their territory. ³² He gave them hail for rain... ³⁶ He also struck down all the first-born in their land ...

Psalm 105, then, speaks into the meaning and purpose of the first drink offering at Tabernacles. It is plain that the first purpose of the feast of Tabernacles is to bring plagues, first upon Egypt, but later upon Babylon, in order to redeem His people from the house of slavery.

The reason the plagues were necessary was because “*He turned their heart to hate His people*” ([Psalm 105:25](#)). In other words, God caused the Egyptians to “*hate His people*” in order to induce them to put Israel into bondage. But in the end, after ten plagues, [Psalm 105:38](#) says, “*Egypt was glad when they departed.*”

We also read in [Psalm 105:37](#), “*Then He brought them out with silver and gold,*” a reference to [Exodus 12:35](#). This was to fulfill the law in [Deut. 15:13, 14, 15](#), which speaks about freeing slaves:

¹³ And when you set him free, you shall not send him away empty-handed. ¹⁴ You shall furnish him liberally from your flock and from your threshing floor and from your wine vat; you shall give to him

as the Lord your God has blessed you.¹⁵ And you shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God redeemed you; therefore I command you this today.

Hence, in our redemption from Babylon, God will again fulfill His law by providing for the redeemed ones “liberally.” Babylon has indeed been blessed by the labor of God’s people, and for this reason Babylon is to give generously to its freed slaves “*as the Lord your God has blessed you.*”

Many have received this revelation of the transfer of wealth, but few understand it in terms of the law of redemption. Even so, it does not require men’s understanding for God to fulfill His word that is prophesied in His law. The fulfillment is based on the New Covenant promise, vow, or oath that God has made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and to all the prophets and apostles in later years who received similar revelation.

The earlier part of the same psalm tells us specifically that this redemption was part of the New Covenant, which was made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. [Psalm 105:7–10](#) says,

⁷ He is the Lord our God. His judgments are in all the earth. ⁸ He has remembered His covenant forever, the word which He commanded to a thousand generations, ⁹ the covenant which He made with Abraham, and His oath to Isaac. ¹⁰ Then He confirmed it to Jacob for a statute, to Israel as an everlasting covenant.

The ultimate purpose of Israel’s redemption is seen in the conclusion. [Psalm 105:43, 45](#) says,

⁴³ And He brought forth His people with joy, His chosen ones with a joyful shout... ⁴⁵ So that they might keep His statutes, and observe His laws. Praise the Lord!

According to the laws of redemption, a redeemed slave was not given the freedom to do as he willed, but became the slave of the one who redeemed him. [Lev. 25:53](#) says,

⁵³ Like a man hired year by year he [the slave] shall be with him [his redeemer]; he shall not rule over him with severity in your sight [because the slave is a near kinsman].

For this reason, the Apostle Paul himself, who understood clearly that Christ had redeemed him from the slavery of the old Jerusalem, called himself “*a bond-servant of Jesus Christ*” ([Rom. 1:1](#)). He refuted the idea that the grace which had saved him had also given him the freedom to sin ([Rom. 6:1, 2](#)).

He explained this further in [Rom. 6:19](#), saying,

¹⁹ For just as you presented your members [body parts] as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness [*anomia*], resulting in further lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification.”

What Christ has done for us on a personal level, redeeming us from bondage to lawlessness, sets the pattern for a release on a greater level—a world-wide release from the slavery of the Babylonian (“beast”) systems of man’s unrighteous government.

Therefore, when Babylon is overthrown by the seven angels, and when God’s people are released from captivity on this large scale, the Kingdom of God will be established in the earth—in actual territory—and the laws of God will become the standard of righteousness and justice for all to obey. All must obey the laws of the King who has redeemed them, and they will lose the freedom to sin.

At the present time, many have thought that true freedom is the right to sin, but God will change their hearts. Then they will understand that the very desire to sin puts men in bondage to lawlessness in the Babylonian system. But

Christ came to redeem them from bondage to their own carnal desires and release them “*as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification.*”

The First Bowls Poured out in 2000

In October of 2000, we were led to hold a Tabernacles conference in Champaign, Illinois. There we poured out the first bowls (water and wine) upon the earth as a witness to the beginning of the judgment upon Babylon and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon mankind. As I wrote earlier, this came at the end of the seven trumpets of the Jubilee Prayer Campaign against Mystery Babylon (1993–2000).

During the year 2000, we received much revelation about roses, the Rose of Sharon, and weddings. Then we scheduled our Tabernacles to be held at a newly remodeled hotel in Quincy, Illinois. However, a group of ministers came from Chicago to threaten the hotel owner for allowing us to meet there. They believed we were some kind of “hate group,” because we dare to call homosexual behavior a sin and because we do not believe that the Israeli state is the fulfillment of the biblical prophecies of the regathering of the House of Israel.

Even so, when these Christian ministers had their meeting with the owner of the hotel in Quincy and brought up the fact that we did not believe that the Israeli state was true Israel, a rabbi at the meeting told them that we were correct. He said that the Jews were Judah, not Israel. The manager told us that this rabbi was then ignored and treated as a pariah for the rest of the meeting. How ironic that we would be condemned by Christians and defended by a rabbi!

The Christian ministers even threatened to pressure the city fathers of Quincy to withdraw the license to operate the hotel. So he had no choice but to cancel our meeting. So thanks to these ministers, we were led to the place of God’s choice—Champaign, Illinois. This was how we came to understand the connection between the first bowl of wine and the wedding feast of Cana. We had to have Champaign for the wedding feast of Cana.

About ten minutes after changing the location for the meeting, I had a phone call from a woman in Idaho asking if I could perform the wedding ceremony for her and her fiancé at the conference. Her name was Sharon, of course, and, like Champaign, it means “a plain.” We knew then that God had arranged a wedding at Champaign in order to parallel the wedding feast of Cana.

And so I performed the wedding on October 20, 2000 at the start of the Tabernacles conference. This wedding signified the time when David was crowned king over all Israel, after he had ruled in Hebron for 7½ years over the tribe of Judah. A monarch is said to be “married” to the nation, and so we knew that the overcomers (“David”) had been crowned with full authority on this date in 2000. We had done the Jubilee Prayer Campaign with partial authority since 1993, but the full authority was needed to complete the work of pouring out the seven bowls of water and wine from 2000–2006.

Chapter 3: The Cleansing Angel

[Revelation 16:3](#) says,

³ And the second angel poured out his bowl into the sea, and it became blood like that of a dead man; and every living thing in the sea died.

Here divine judgment is directed against the “sea,” but this is no more literal than the “*loathsome and malignant sore*” caused by the first angel’s action. To destroy all life in the sea would virtually end all life on earth, but obviously, that is not in the divine plan.

Day 2: Psalm 29

In ancient times, the priests sang Psalm 29 as they poured out the water and wine on either side of the altar in the temple in Jerusalem on the second day of the feast of Tabernacles. [Psalm 29:3, 4](#) says,

³ The voice of the Lord is upon the waters; the God of glory thunders, the Lord is over many waters. ⁴ The voice of the Lord is powerful, the voice of the Lord is majestic.

Psalm 29 speaks seven times of “*the voice of the Lord*,” also called “*thunders*.” The second bowl of wine therefore signified the voice of God speaking with power, shaking the wilderness ([Psalm 29:8](#)) and stripping the forests bare ([Psalm 29:9](#)). [Deut. 20:19](#) and [Judges 9:8](#) show us that the trees represent men. Dr. Bullinger says that stripping the forest bare means “layeth open to view.” In other words, the voice of God is uncovering sin in the church for all to see, because the church did not repent, but had covered its sin in order to perpetuate it.

For this reason, God sent the Cleansing Angel to speak with the voice of God, expose the sin for all to see, and thereby proclaim to all that the “Saul” church was disqualified to rule the Kingdom in the Age to come.

The Second Bowls Poured out in 2001

In October of 2001, we poured out the second bowls of water and wine into the “sea” (Lake Huron) at Port Austin, Michigan. At the time I explained the revelation that we had received that we were bearing witness to divine judgment upon the church, particularly the Roman Catholic Church (the “Holy See”). The “sea” in this case is the same sea that brought forth the beast from the sea in [Rev. 13:1](#). I wrote of this in my book, [The Wars of the Lord, chapter 34](#),

“Within a few weeks of pouring out this second bowl into Lake Huron, Superior Court Judge Constance Sweeney forced the Boston archdiocese to release the information in its files about John J. Geoghan. Cardinal Bernard Law was then forced to release the records, which showed that not only Geoghan but also another 90 priests had molested children in previous years. The Roman Church had covered up this information and in many cases simply transferred those offending priests to other places, where they were free to continue their perverted activities.

“Geoghan was convicted and sent to prison, and the big scandal began to be reported in many magazines and newspapers. The public relations damage on the Roman Church was enormous.”

In the aftermath of this public relations disaster, Newsweek magazine put a headline on the cover of its May 6, 2002 issue: “*What Would Jesus Do? Beyond the Priest Scandal; Christianity at a Crossroads.*” On page 26 the magazine wrote:

“The best guess is that between 35 and 50 percent of Roman Catholic priests are homosexual. ‘Hypocrisy is almost too weak a word for what the hierarchy is doing,’ says Mark D. Jordan, a professor of religion at

Emory University and a gay Catholic. 'If there were no homosexuals in the priesthood, we would soon cease to have a functioning church'."

When the Cleansing Angel poured out the second bowl upon the sea, the church was affected, and the Roman Church most of all. It was a painful time, and many of the archdiocese were sued and were forced into bankruptcy. But worst of all, the church lost its moral right to stand against the homosexual agenda, paving the way for the Sodomization of the West. Church hypocrisy silenced it, and when the church did nothing to remove homosexual priests from their positions, the church tacitly came into agreement with the Babylonian moral viewpoint. Whatever "life" had been in the "Holy See" died.

Chapter 4: The Appearing of Sons Angel

[Revelation 16:4–7](#) says,

⁴ And the third angel poured out his bowl into the rivers and the springs of waters; and they became blood. ⁵ And I heard the angel of the waters saying, “Righteous art Thou, who art and who wast, O Holy One, because Thou didst judge these things; ⁶ for they poured out the blood of saints and prophets, and Thou hast given them blood to drink. They deserve it.” ⁷ And I heard the altar saying, “Yes, O Lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are Thy judgments.”

The third angel is called The Appearing of Sons, also known as “*the angel of the waters*.” The third bowl is related to the second. The main difference is that the second bowl was poured out upon the sea, while the third was poured out upon the rivers and springs. The result is the same, because in both cases the water was turned to blood. This, of course, reminds us of the first plague upon Egypt, where the Nile River and all the water in the land was turned to blood.

Whereas the Cleansing Angel brought “*the voice of God*” to speak judgment upon the “Holy See,” the Appearing of Sons Angel now justifies this judgment. “*They deserve it*,” is the divine verdict, and the altar itself, in whose pipes on both sides the bowls of wine were poured, speaks forth its own testimony of truth that the judgments of God are “*true and righteous*.”

Day 3: Psalm 50:16–23

It is because the church, like King Saul, was disqualified to rule beyond a certain point that God has raised up the overcomers, even as God raised up David to replace Saul’s rebellious and oppressive reign. So the third angel brings the word of this replacement, and this is borne out by [Psalm 50:16–23](#), which the priests sang when the third bowl was poured out at the altar on the third day of Tabernacles.

¹⁶ But to the wicked God says, “What right have you to tell My statutes, and to take My covenant in your mouth? ¹⁷ For you hate discipline, and you cast My words behind you.

When “the wicked” try to teach God’s laws and claim His covenant, they act hypocritically. God says that those who “hate discipline,” those whose hearts will not receive correction, have no right to hold positions of government or priesthood.

Here I must mention that there are really two main prophetic types of the church in the Old Testament: King Saul and Eli the high priest. The first speaks of the pope’s political claim, while the second speaks of the pope’s claim as high priest (“Pontifex Maximus”). In the end, both Saul and Eli were replaced on account of their sin and their refusal to repent. Saul was replaced by David, and the line of Eli was replaced by Zadok ([2 Kings 2:27, 35](#)). So also, the Roman church has been replaced by the overcomers, who are of the Order of Melchizedek.

The third bowl of wine, poured out by the third angel, speaks of this replacement. Psalm 50 supports this by giving the indictment against those who have ruled corruptly and hypocritically. [Psalm 50:18](#) continues with its indictment, saying,

¹⁸ When you see a thief, you are pleased with him, and you associate with adulterers.

One big reason why the church has become corrupt is because promotions are largely based on the ability to raise money for the church. The love of money permeates the church, which sanctifies their hidden motives by the principle that the end justifies the means. So the church developed the practice of selling “indulgences,” by which the church sells time off from Purgatory. If the church truly had such power to get people out of Purgatory, one would think that they would love their parishioners enough to extend such salvation freely.

In fact, there was one pope who was truly righteous in this regard. Pope Celestine V was a hermit name Peter Morone, and when the cardinals in 1294 were unable to agree on the election of a pope, they decided on a whim to drag Peter from his cave and to make him pope. His first act was to forgive all and to declare a Jubilee *free of charge*. Further, he began to give large sums of money to the poor.

The cardinals were alarmed, foreseeing only financial ruin. So his secretary of state, Benedict Gaetani, convinced him to resign and was subsequently elected as Pope Boniface VIII. Peter Morone happily returned to his familiar cave, but soon Boniface arrested him and threw him in prison, where he soon died, either of poison or starvation.

The time was 1,260 years from the day of Pentecost (33–1293 A.D.). At the end of 3½ “times,” God gave the Roman church an opportunity to repent and a second “Peter” gave the church an opportunity for a new beginning. But the church failed to change its ways, because it had rejected divine discipline and had cast aside the word of God. They preferred to steal money from the people and defraud them by their practice of selling indulgences. As a result, they threw the righteous pope into prison and went back to “business as usual.”

[Psalm 50:19–21](#) continues,

¹⁹ You let your mouth loose in evil, and your tongue frames deceit. ²⁰ You sit and speak against your brother; you slander your own mother’s son. ²¹ These things you have done, and I kept silence; you thought that I was just like you; I will reprove you, and state the case in order before your eyes.

After a long time of divine silence, the divine reproof came in 2002 in the year after we poured out the second bowl of wine. This was an act of judgment before the divine court, when “the case” was stated, or presented to God for judgment. The results were seen in the following year, as we already noted on page 16.

The rest of Psalm 50 gives the conclusion of the matter:

²² Now consider this, you who forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver. ²³ He who offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving honors Me; and to him who orders his way aright I shall show the salvation of God.

This speaks of the righteous ones, the overcomers, whom God has raised up to replace those “*who forget God*.” Those whose hearts are obedient, those who accept discipline when they go astray, are the ones who will see “*the salvation of God*.” The word translated “salvation” is the Hebrew word *yasha*, which is a form of Yeshua (Jesus).

Though the psalmist does not give specifics about this, the fact that it was read on Tishri 16, the second day of Tabernacles at the time of the drink offering, tells us that it is fulfilled by the Appearance of Sons Angel. In other words, this is a promise that the overcomers will be manifested as the Sons of God at the end of the age when the dead are raised in the First Resurrection and the living overcomers are changed into His image.

The Third Bowls Poured Out in 2002

On September 27, 2002 we poured out the bowls of water and wine into the Mississippi River at the Islands of Peace in Fridley, Minnesota. Pouring the wine upon the Islands of Peace bore witness to judgment upon peace itself. The following March (2003), America and a coalition of nations invaded Iraq and overthrew Saddam Hussein.

This was only the start of an open-ended “war on terror” that would never end, apart from divine intervention. Someone in or above the US government had decided to “destabilize the Mideast” and to overthrow “seven countries in five years,” as General Wesley Clark has testified many times in speeches since that time.

In other words, the invasion of Iraq was only the first part of a larger war plan to cause chaos in the Mideast and stir up perpetual war, probably designed to prevent nations from attacking the Israeli state. Another motive, no doubt, was

to justify the destruction of American freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution in the name of increased “security.” In other words, someone staged a coup, and the mainstream media covered it up.

Nonetheless, the revelation of the seven bowls tells us that this coup will fail in the end, for ultimately, the bowls of wine are directed against these ungodly “beasts.” God has caused them to overplay their hand and to expose their plots in order to overthrow their power.

Chapter 5: The All Consuming Breath Angel

[Revelation 16:8, 9](#) says,

- ⁸ And the fourth angel poured out his bowl upon the sun; and it was given to it to scorch men with fire.**
⁹ And men were scorched with fierce heat; and they blasphemed the name of God who has the power over these plagues; and they did not repent, so as to give Him glory.

The sun represents civil and religious leadership. This fourth bowl of judgment (wine) is directed at civil and religious leadership. We noted this earlier in our study of the fourth trumpet in [Rev. 8:12](#), but it is plain from verse 9 above that they will not repent at the time the bowl is poured out. Even so, God's hand of judgment begins to bring them into accountability for their sins. According to my personal revelation, the All Consuming Breath Angel is the one pouring out the fourth bowl of wine.

Day 4: Psalm 94:16–23

When the fourth bowls of water and wine were poured out at the altar on the fourth day of the feast of Tabernacles, the priests sang [Psalm 94:16–23](#). Verses 20 and 21 speak of unrighteous thrones—that is, unrighteous leaders and their laws:

- ²⁰ Can a throne of destruction be allied with Thee, one which devises mischief by decree? ²¹ They band themselves together against the life of the righteous, and condemn the innocent to death.**

Lawless men hypocritically appeal to God for support when they declare unrighteous wars, because religious people require prayer to make them think that God is on their side, whether or not their wars are justified. But the psalmist concludes that their wickedness will come back to haunt them. [Psalm 94:23](#) says,

- ²³ And He has brought back their wickedness upon them, and will destroy them in their evil; the Lord our God will destroy them.**

This, then, is the prophecy given at the time of the fourth bowl of wine poured out at the feast of Tabernacles.

The Fourth Bowls Poured out in 2003

On October 14–17, 2003, we held a Tabernacles conference in Chandler, Arizona just south of Phoenix in the “Valley of the Sun.” On the final afternoon (Oct. 17) the group of about 80–90 people gathered in a nearby shopping mall parking lot to pour out the fourth bowls of wine and water upon the ground. Before we could do so, a few guards from the mall swooped down upon us in a threatening manner, telling us that we were on private property and could not gather here.

I did not argue with them or challenge their authority but asked if I could have just 15 seconds. They agreed. That was all the time it took to complete our work. The head guard then showed up (a woman), and some of the people explained to her our purpose. We told her that we were just gathering for the Feast of Tabernacles, and that our purpose was to pray a blessing upon this area. She then apologized for the over-zealous guards, who had assumed that we were coming to cause a riot.

I found it significant that in pouring out the bowls upon the “sun” (leadership), we would be challenged by the guards (authority figures). But when it came right down to it, they allowed us to carry out our witness on the earth, and we then left peaceably.

Signs in the Sun Begin

Almost immediately after the angel poured out the bowl upon the sun, scientists began to see huge solar flares (“sunspots”). The first was seen October 22, and its effects hit the earth on the 24th. On the 28th, the third largest solar flare ever recorded was seen, and it struck the earth the following day. Its solar wind speed was 5.6 million miles per hour, more than twice as fast as any solar storm recorded in the past 40 years.

The Washington Post ran an article about this on Oct. 30, saying,

“A second huge magnetic solar storm hit the Earth on Thursday, just a day after an earlier one hurtled into the planet in what one astronomer called an unprecedented one-two punch.

“It’s like the Earth is looking right down the barrel of a giant gun pointed at us by the sun ... and it’s taken two big shots at us, said John Kohl ...

“Kohl, the lead investigator for an instrument aboard NASA’s sun-watching SOHO spacecraft, said the probability of two huge flares aimed directly at Earth coming so close together, as they have this week, was ‘unprecedented’ ... so low that it is a statistical anomaly.

“The Northern Lights were seen as far south as El Paso, Texas on the Mexico border.”

Two weeks later, on November 2 and 3 there were three more “extreme” solar flares. Senior science writer, Robert Roy Britt, said,

“... astronomers have never witnessed such a string of activity like this.”

He also quotes Paul Brekke, deputy project manager of the SOHO spacecraft, as saying,

“I think the last week will go into the history books as one of the most dramatic periods of solar activity we have seen in modern times.”

Then on November 4, a huge solar flare was measured and recorded as a Category X-20. This was by far the largest ever recorded, and the scientists were relieved that it did not flare directly toward the earth. Later, as they were able to analyze it, this was upgraded to an X-40, twice as large as originally thought.

All of this was so unusual that National Geographic’s Spring issue featured these solar flares on its front cover and had a large full-color, fold-out chart to go with it. There is no question that the scientists were quite impressed with God’s solar show.

Of course, the literal sun show was only a sign in the heavens to bear witness to the fourth bowl poured out upon the sun. It bore witness to the fact that this was indeed the timing of the fourth bowl in [Rev. 16:8, 9](#).

As for its actual meaning, which is far more important, it was a heavenly call for leaders—including President George W. Bush—to repent on behalf of the nation for its unrighteous wars.

The Call to Repent (Change)

We were led to pour out the fourth bowls of water and wine in October of 2003. Earlier that year the United States and its “coalition forces” had invaded Iraq on the pretense that Saddam Hussein was attempting to construct nuclear weapons. That excuse, of course, turned out to be a blatant lie. So a second excuse was given to justify the war: to export Western Democracy to the Middle East.

However, General Wesley Clark testified in many speeches that the real plan was to overthrow seven Mideast nations in five years, and no one in the Pentagon seemed to know why, other than that the plan was to “destabilize the Middle East.” Iraq was only one of the five. Egypt and Syria were other major powers slated for destabilization.

By 2015 the hidden purpose for this destabilization was finally revealed, though some may argue that this was an “unintended consequence.” Either way, this war policy flooded Europe and America with countless Muslim refugees fleeing the violence and disruption, causing chaos and a complete breakdown of any immigration controls that had been in place. Certainly, the intelligence agencies knew what problems this would cause, but those power brokers of Babylon who rule in secret fully intend to arouse resentment and anger in the West in order to spark World War III.

The top power brokers of Babylon are Satanists and Luciferians. The visible world leaders must do as they are told, or their own indiscretions will be leaked to the press. Some have been assassinated. These leaders know that the people themselves are too ignorant of the truth to support them in any attempt to stand against these hidden Satanist leaders. The people have been dumbed down in the schools, and their morals have been corrupted.

These Satanists understand biblical law better than most Christians do. They know that if they can increase the sin in a nation, then divine judgment will allow these Babylonian oligarchs to continue ruling the world. The one thing they fear most—with good reason—is a genuine national repentance that is brought about by an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. This is something that is beyond their control, but they do everything in their power to prevent this by giving people the freedom to sin and even causing the people to think that sin is good.

So [Rev. 16:9](#) says “*they did not repent, so as to give Him glory.*” Repentance results in God receiving glory. In part, true repentance comes when men acknowledge Jesus Christ as the One having the right to rule as King of creation. In other words, men need to respect His laws and commands, rather than ignore them.

Secondly, we should understand that men are incapable of repentance apart from a sovereign act of God. Paul tells us in [Rom. 2:4](#), “*the kindness of God leads you to repentance.*” The flesh is helpless apart from the work of the Holy Spirit. God initiates, and man responds. *We love, because He first loved us,*” says [1 John 4:19](#). The psalmist prays in [Psalm 80:17–19](#),

¹⁷ Let Thy hand be upon the man of Thy right hand, upon the son of man whom Thou didst make strong for Thyself, ¹⁸ then we shall not turn back from Thee; revive us, and we will call upon Thy name. ¹⁹ O Lord God of hosts, restore us; cause Thy face to shine upon us, and we will be saved.

It seems that in the providence of God’s plan for the nation, we must be brought down to the depths of degradation and sin in order to know by experience the results of going down that path. But at some point God will turn our hearts, so that we may be restored. Then the people will gladly accept Jesus Christ as King.

Summary

The bowls of wine, then, are accompanied by the bowls of water. These appeal to the divine court, not only for judgment upon Babylon and its unrighteous kingdom, but also for divine intervention by the Holy Spirit, so that the Kingdom of God may be established in the earth. Hence, when we poured out the bowls from 2000–2006, we appealed to the divine court not only to overthrow Babylon, but also to send the rain of His Spirit to cause men to repent.

John the Baptist, the “Elijah” of his time, prophesied of the Holy Spirit that would come through the Messiah. In [Matt. 3:11, 12](#) he said,

¹¹ ... He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹² And His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

The Holy Spirit is pictured as an all-consuming fire because it consumes chaff, which is “the flesh.” The Hebrew word for spirit is *ruach*, which is also “breath.” When the Holy Spirit descends upon us, the breath of God consumes the impurities of the flesh and gives the breath of life at the same time. This changes us from the inside, writing His laws upon our heart, so that we may go beyond obedience and into agreement with the nature and word of God.

Hence, the All Consuming Breath Angel is sent in the fourth set of bowls of water and wine in order to cause the nations to repent.

Chapter 6: The Overcoming Flesh Angel

[Revelation 16:10, 11](#) says,

¹⁰ And the fifth angel poured out his bowl upon the throne of the beast; and his kingdom became darkened; and they gnawed their tongues because of pain, ¹¹ and they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores; and they did not repent of their deeds.

he fourth and fifth bowls are closely related. The fourth angel poured out his bowl upon the “sun,” which represents kings and leadership in general. The fifth angel poured out his bowl upon “*the throne of the beast*.” Hence, the kings and their thrones are both judged.

The psalms sung at the time of these two drink offerings at the feast of Tabernacles are also closely related. The fourth bowls of wine and water were poured out while singing [Psalm 94:16–23](#), while the previous verses ([Psalm 94:8–15](#)) were sung with the fifth bowls. Both passages are part of the same psalm, but in reverse order.

Since the throne of the beast comes under divine judgment in the fifth bowl, one would think that this throne would be mentioned in [Psalm 94:8–15](#). However, the “*throne of destruction*” appears in [Psalm 94:20](#), which is identified with the fourth bowl. Hence, the two bowls seem intertwined.

Day 5: Psalm 94:8–15

The role of the Overcoming Flesh Angel (my personal revelation) is seen clearly in the passage that was read while pouring out the bowls of water and wine on the fifth day of Tabernacles. [Psalm 94:8–10](#) says,

⁸ Pay heed, you senseless among the people; and when will you understand, stupid ones? ⁹ He who planted the ear, does He not hear? He who formed the eye, does He not see? ¹⁰ He who chastens the nations, will He not rebuke, even He who teaches man knowledge?

This angel is assigned to change people from “senseless” and “stupid” to overcomers by means of divine judgment, thereby fulfilling the prophecy of the water and wine together. He “*chastens the nations*” in order to teach men knowledge. The judgment of the “wine” therefore has a good purpose, because it is accompanied by the “water” of the Holy Spirit. So [Psalm 94:12–15](#) continues,

¹² Blessed is the man whom Thou dost chasten, O Lord, and dost teach out of Thy law; ¹³ that Thou mayest grant him relief from the days of adversity, until a pit is dug for the wicked. ¹⁴ For the Lord will not abandon His people, nor will He forsake His inheritance. ¹⁵ For judgment will again be righteous; and all the upright in heart will follow it.

We may view this on two levels. First, if we distinguish between “*the wicked*” and the “*senseless among the people*” who are also called the “*stupid ones*,” we note that both groups need some chastisement. The difference is that the senseless ones repent, while the wicked do not. One group is taught “*out of Thy law*,” while the others refuse to learn His laws and His ways. This viewpoint shows us how God will separate His people from the wicked, bringing “relief” to His people and “a pit” for the wicked. This separation occurs at the time of Babylon’s judgment.

The broader view, of course, is for a later time at the Great White Throne judgment, where the wicked will be turned, and every knee will bow. All will “*swear allegiance*” to Christ, as [Isaiah 45:23](#) tells us, and Paul adds in [Phil. 2:11](#) that this will be “*to the glory of God the Father*.”

It is the responsibility of the Overcoming Flesh Angel to teach the law to the “senseless” ones among God’s people, so that they understand the mind of God. By His power, their ears and eyes are opened. The psalmist reminds us that God created ears and eyes. He reminded Moses of this in similar fashion, telling him in [Exodus 4:11](#),

¹¹ And the Lord said to him, “Who has made man’s mouth? Or who makes him dumb or deaf, or seeing or blind? Is it not I, the Lord?”

At the end of Israel’s forty-year wilderness experience, Moses said in [Deut. 29:4](#),

⁴ Yet to this day the Lord has not given you a heart to know, nor eyes to see, nor ears to hear.

This blindness and deafness, seen in the church in the wilderness, has also prevailed in the church during the Pentecostal Age of the Seven Churches. These are the “senseless” and “stupid” people whose eyes and ears will be opened as their flesh is overcome. Such teaching is necessary for them to be part of the Kingdom in the Age to come, for anyone who wants to retain the right to sin will have to do so in “outer darkness,” rather than in the Kingdom of Light.

This great moment of history, where blind eyes are healed, is to be compared and contrasted to the great healing center of Aesculapius in the city of Pergamum.

Pergamum is Satan’s Throne

The throne (or seat) of the beast appears to be connected to Pergamum, or Pergamos, “*where Satan’s throne is*” ([Rev. 2:13](#)). It was where the great throne of Zeus was located, as we noted in chapter 14 of Book 1. (Note the caduceus in the lap of Baphomet in the picture on page 30.) There is a connection between “*Satan’s throne*” and “*the throne of the beast*” in [Rev. 16:10](#).

In his book, *The Latter Rain*, Jay Atkinson writes an article, saying,

“Pergamum was the famous site of the temple to Aesculapius, the Greek god of healing supposed to be the founder of medical science and immortalized in the sky as the constellation Ophiuchus. The city became the seat of Babylonian sun worship, a noble center of idolatry and demon controlled religions with splendid temples to Nature. People from all over the Roman empire came to seek healing in this pagan temple and the shrine area was inhabited by thousands of harmless snakes. On the hills of Acropolis stood resplendent buildings, statuary, palaces, and the great library as well as the temples and an altar of ‘Zeus the Savior.’ Medicine and science was worshipped here and the symbol of their worship was the serpent. The snake was carried down into our own day with a staff entwined with serpents called the caduceus, still using the snake as a symbol for the medical arts; Aesculapius is depicted holding the caduceus in his hand.”

www.latter-rain.com/escha/pergam.htm

The caduceus is, even today, the primary symbol of the medical profession. It can have either a positive or a negative connotation. On the negative side, the caduceus of Pergamos, “Satan’s throne,” refers to the serpent in the tree in the story of Adam and Eve. On the positive side, it was the bronze serpent in the wilderness under Moses. When the people looked upon that serpent, they were healed of the serpent bites (curse of sin). [Num. 21:9](#) says,

⁹ And Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on the standard; and it came about, that if a serpent bit any man, when he looked to the bronze serpent, he lived.

In [John 3:14, 15](#) and again in [John 12:32, 33](#), Jesus was compared to that serpent that Moses lifted up in the wilderness. Some find this strange that Jesus would be compared to the serpent when He was lifted up on the cross. But in His death, He was made to be a curse for us. The bronze serpent was the antidote to the poison of the serpents that had bitten the people. That poison is sin, and the antidote was that Jesus was made a curse for us, that we might live.

This is the positive side to the caduceus, the serpent on the pole or tree. The priests in the temple of Aesculapius in Pergamos did not know the positive side of this. Their serpent-worship was a counterfeit that ended up worshipping the serpent in Genesis 3, and this made their temple “Satan’s throne.”

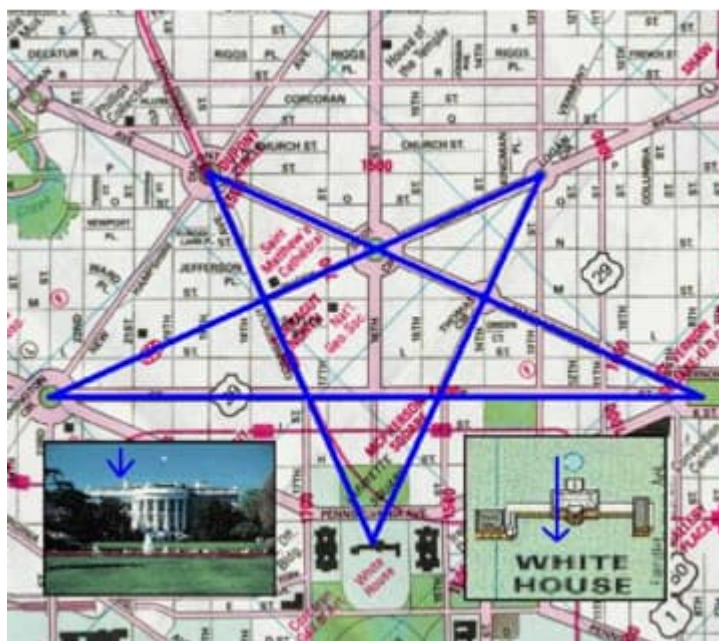
The Fifth Bowls Poured out in 2004

We were led to pour out the fifth bowls of water and wine in Washington D.C., the throne of the beast in our era. In April 2004 Bob Henley and I drove to Washington D.C. on a scouting trip in preparation for pouring out the fifth bowls. I was led to take a jar of water from the Mississippi River near the Island of Peace, where we had poured out the third bowls of water and wine two years earlier.

We went to Washington knowing only that we were to pour out this water somewhere in Washington on April 8 to fulfill the law of spiritual warfare found in [Deut. 20:10](#),

¹⁰ When you approach a city to fight against it, you shall offer it terms of peace.

After walking the entire area and visiting each point on the pentagram north of the White House, we prayed to know which place to pour out the water. The Lord said to do so at Scott Circle. This street intersection is located on the forehead of the goat (Baphomet) directly north of the White House. When the city was built in the late 1700's, the streets were designed by the Masonic builders to form a pentagram in order to dedicate the nation's capital to Baphomet (Satan).



To high-ranking Masons, Baphomet is “the god of wisdom.” He was portrayed as having the head of a goat, but had the body of a man and breasts of a woman. He was also part dog and part bull. This was the way he was portrayed in the 19th century painting below by the well-known Mason, Eliphas Levi.

In William E. Mann’s book, [The Knights Templar in the New World](#), p. 121 and 122, he writes:



“The Nineteenth-century occultist Alphonse Constant, a former Roman Catholic priest who took the Jewish pseudonym Eliphas Levi, wrote extensively about Baphomet as a conduit to God. According to Levi, the head of Baphomet is seen to combine the characteristics of a dog, a bull, and a goat, which are meant to represent the three sources of the pagan Mystery tradition Baphomet’s androgynous nature is emphasized by one arm being muscular and masculine while the other is of a more feminine nature.”

Later, on page 185, the same author writes,

“It was determined that there exists a secret code in a number of the Dead Sea Scrolls that the Templars may have learned during their time in the Holy Land. Indeed, a noted expert on early Christianity, Dr. High Schonfield, demonstrated that if the name Baphomet was written in this code and then translated, the result would be the Greek word Sophia (meaning wisdom). From this, it can be concluded that when the Templars worshipped Baphomet, what they were really worshipping was the principle of wisdom and not some form of Satanism.”

In spite of their claims to worship wisdom rather than being Satanists, Albert Pike, the great Freemason of the Scottish Rite in the 1800’s was an avowed Luciferian. Furthermore, I once had to cast out this spirit of Baphomet from a woman whose high-ranking Masonic parents had dedicated her to Satan when she was five years old. Hence, their claim not to worship Baphomet or Satan is designed to deceive people into joining the order, where they soon become trapped by terrible oaths of loyalty to hidden masters serving Baphomet.

The street design in Washington D.C. placed the White House at the “mouth” of Baphomet, in order to turn the presidents into the spokesmen for the false god of Freemasonry.

Washington and Rome

When Washington D.C. was founded, the highest point was called Jenkins Point. In the 1790’s it was owned by Daniel Carroll—the brother of Catholic Bishop John Carroll. David Ovason tells us, “that in earlier times the hill had been called Rome” (The Secret Architecture of our National Capital, pp. 8, 9,

“Indeed, the story might easily be taken for the stuff of myth were it not supported by a long manuscript in the Maryland State Archives, at Annapolis. The deed, dated June 5, 1663, is in the name of Francis Pope, and sets out the basis for a survey of a strip of land called Rome, bounded by the inlet called Tiber.”

Symbolism is very important to secret societies, even to the Jesuits. This is why Francis Pope’s land (called “Rome”) was used to build our nation’s capital, Washington D.C. It was to assert the Roman Catholic Church’s claim upon America, *which they still maintain* on the grounds that Columbus claimed this new land for the Church. (By the way, Columbus never even saw the mainland in America. He discovered some islands in the Caribbean Sea.)

The layout for Washington D.C. was entrusted to a French Masonic engineer named Pierre-Charles L'Enfant. He got the job at the suggestion of Roman Catholic bishop John Carroll. L'Enfant laid out the main city streets in the shape of an upside down five-pointed star of Baphomet, the symbol of the goat. The White House was constructed at the goat's mouth. The two ears on the sides were marked by Mt. Vernon Place and Washington Circle. The horns were marked by Logan Circle and Dupont Circle.

In surveying and laying out the new city, L'Enfant numbered the city blocks. The 600 series runs from Q Street North through the Capitol grounds down to the mouth of James Creek. On page 228 of his book, Rulers of Evil, F. Tupper Saussy tells us,

“All the numbers between 600 and 900 are assigned to blocks within this swath—except for the number 666. That number is missing from the map. It must have been secretly affixed to the only unnumbered section of blocks in the 600 series. That section, we find, includes the Capitol grounds that once were called ‘Rome’.”

In other words, the Capitol was built on Lot #666 according to the original survey, but in order to hide this fact, they skipped the number entirely, but did not assign any number at all to the spot where the capitol stands. Hence, the entire plan for Washington D.C. was to suggest that it was the “throne of the beast,” which in this case was the throne of Baphomet, the god of Freemasonry.

The Templar-Masonic Connection

On April 8, 2004 we poured out the water (taken from the Island of Peace) at the foot of the statue of General Winfield Scott. We spoke a warning to the beast system, admonishing it to repent and submit to the rule of the rightful Heir of all things—Jesus Christ, the King.

We knew, of course, that there would be no repentance because [Rev. 16:11](#) says specifically, “*they did not repent of their deeds.*” Nonetheless, to fulfill all righteousness, it was necessary to do this, for it gave the beast system a full six months in which to repent.

Six months later, on Oct. 6, 2004, I poured out the wine at the same location. There were twelve of us who bore witness to that occasion. In essence, I stated to the beast in the name of Jesus that in view of the fact that he had not repented or submitted to Jesus Christ, He was declaring war against the throne of the beast.

The statue of General Winfield Scott is the only one that does not give any clues as to who this man was or why he was being honored with a statue. There is only one word on the statue itself—“Scott”—and there are no signs or monuments nearby to explain it. No title, rank, or even a first name was inscribed anywhere. The only clue we had was that across the street was the General Scott Hotel. This told us that he was a general.



We had to find him on the internet. We discovered that he was the longest-serving general in history (56 years) and he retired in 1861 near the beginning of the Civil War.

I believe that there was a reason why he disrespectfully appears only by the name “Scott.” I believe that it is not really a monument to the general, but in fact was meant to be an insult to the general by stripping him of his rank and identity. It was instead a monument to SCOTTish Rite Masonry, and for this reason the statue is located on the forehead of the Baphomet street design just a few blocks south of the Masonic Temple.

The pentagram itself is bisected by 16th street going straight north and south to Scott Circle from the White House. This street represents a candle in the middle of the pentagram (skull).

The top of the candle is Scott Circle. Directly above it as one continues north on 16th street there are 10 white statues of Venus in a row [**pictured below**]. These statues serve as the “wick” on the candle. A few blocks further north is the House of the Temple, the “Headquarters of the Supreme Council, 33rd degree, of the Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, Southern Jurisdiction, USA.” Built in 1911, they situated the temple to represent the fire or light on the wick of the candle.



The candle, with its wax body and fire, symbolizes the union of heaven and earth, spirit and matter. That is why Venus, the goddess of love, is represented by the wick on this candle. It manifests a sexual union between Venus (the earth) and Mars (the heavens).

As the “wick,” she is the point of contact that attracts the god of heaven to the earth. Masonry tries to unite heaven and earth by spiritual forces that are controlled by the flesh and by the fleshly will of man.

And so we saw that Scott Circle is really the most important of the points on the pentagram, although it is not one of the five points, but is actually the juncture between the two upper points. Care has been taken to downplay its importance, but the Lord exposed its importance to us.

The Grand Commander of Scottish Rite Masonry in the 1800’s, Albert Pike, calls Masonry the “successor of the Mysteries” in his book, Morals and Dogma (page 22). On page 23 he writes,

“Though Masonry is identical with the ancient Mysteries, it is so only in this qualified sense: that it presents but an imperfect image of their brilliancy, the ruins only of their grandeur, and a system that has experienced progressive alterations, the fruits of social events, political circumstances, and the ambitious imbecility of its improvers.”

In other words, Masonry tries hard to imitate the Egyptian Mystery religion, and they only regret that they fall short of its “brilliancy.” The Bible, of course, has much to say about the Egyptian religion, and by no stretch of the imagination does it promote it as a true religion.

The Tabernacles Conference in 2004

In the painting of Baphomet by Eliphas Levi, the caduceus is portrayed in the beast’s groin area. Here, then, is the connecting link between the god of Masonry and the medical-drug system. The two come together in the Shriners

Hospitals, the primary philanthropic medical arm of the Masonic Order. Masons can always point to these when the Order itself comes under criticism, as if doing good compensates for their worship of Baphomet.

We were led to hold our 2004 Tabernacles conference at the Holiday Inn at the huge medical center in Houston, Texas. It happened that a friend of mine from Houston wanted to host the conference, and since his wife worked at the medical center, the conference was easily arranged. It was easy to see that we were led to meet there in order to pray-decree the overthrow of Baphomet's fleshly dominance over the medical and pharmaceutical industry and replace it by the work of the Overcoming Flesh Angel.

During the Feast of Tabernacles of 2004 the Vioxx scandal hit the news. On September 30, 2004, the first day of the feast of Tabernacles, Pharmaceutical giant, Merck, was forced to recall its lucrative drug, Vioxx, in the midst of scandal. The next day our conference in Houston began, lasting from October 1–3, 2004. Two weeks later, British correspondent Rosie Murray-West wrote about the scandal in *The Telegraph* on October 15, 2004,

“The pharmaceutical industry routinely bribes doctors and ‘ghostwrites’ articles about drugs in major medical journals, MPs were told yesterday.

“Professor David Healy, of the University of Wales, told the Commons health select committee that as many as half the articles published in journals such as the British Medical Journal and The Lancet were written by members of the industry who had a vested interest in selling the drugs involved.

“Respected clinicians were then paid to have their names put at the top of the articles, he claimed, even though they had not seen the raw data on which they were based ...

“He said he had been asked to put his name to an article, but had not done so. He then saw the same article bearing the name of Siegfried Kasper, from the Department of General Psychiatry at the University of Vienna. ...

“The pharmaceutical industry is reeling from the recent withdrawal of the rheumatoid arthritis drug, Vioxx, and widespread concerns over the anti-depressant Seroxat being prescribed for children.”

I believe that this exposure, which sent the pharmaceutical industry “reeling,” was a sign of divine judgment upon this aspect of Baphomet's rule in Washington D.C. A few days after the Houston conference, on October 6, 2004, the seventh day of Tabernacles, we poured the bowl of wine at the foot of the statue of General Scott in Washington D.C.

The Fifth Sign in John

The fifth sign in the gospel of John correlates with the fifth bowls poured out on the fifth day of Tabernacles. These signs in John, of course, prophesy of the positive side of the feast of Tabernacles, that is, the bowls of water and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

The fifth sign is found in [John 6:16–21](#), where Jesus walked on the water to meet the disciples during the storm in the middle of the Sea of Galilee. It is a prophecy of the second coming of Christ, where Peter (representing the overcomers) goes out to meet Him. It also seems to set the timing of Christ's coming on the fifth day of Tabernacles.

In 2004 my friend Kevin Peters asked if he could organize the Tabernacles conference at the medical center in Houston, Texas. I knew immediately that this was in accordance with the divine plan, for he was representing Peter in the gospel of John.

So we went to Houston in 2004 to decree judgment upon man's attempts to heal disease with “gall” (poppies) and “wormwood” (opium, drugs) and to declare healing through the Balm of Gilead ([Jer. 8:22; 9:15](#)). For a longer study on the prophetic significance of wormwood and gall, see [chapter 7 of Deuteronomy, the Second Law, Book 10](#).

Chapter 7: The Angel of Pure Influence

[Revelation 16:12](#) says,

¹² And the sixth angel poured out his bowl upon the great river, the Euphrates; and its water was dried up, that the way might be prepared for the kings from the east.

The sixth angel is the Angel of Pure Influence. This is seen in the psalm that was sung while the sixth bowls of water and wine were being poured out at the altar in Jerusalem on the sixth day of Tabernacles. There they sang [Psalm 81:6–16](#), which speaks of Israel’s deliverance from Egypt. The psalm is thus applied to the greater deliverance from Mystery Babylon in our time.

Day 6: Psalm 81:6–16

In addition to a portion of the psalm being used during the feast of Tabernacles, the entire Psalm was sung every Thursday in the temple, commemorating the events of Exodus 17. In [Exodus 17:5, 6](#), Moses struck the rock so that the people could obtain water to drink. Paul later said in [1 Cor. 10:4](#),

⁴ and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ.

Traditionally, Moses struck the rock on the 40th day of the Pentecost cycle, dating from the wave-sheaf offering. Since the wave-sheaf offering always fell on the first Sunday after Passover, the 40th day always fell on a Thursday. Hence, Psalm 81 was read every Thursday. But the 40th day was also the traditional day that Elijah ascended, and [Acts 1:3](#) tells us that Jesus ascended on the 40th day after meeting with people after His resurrection.

When Jesus ascended, He took with Him the glory of God that had been seen last on the Mount of Olives ([Ezekiel 11:23](#)). Jesus’ ascension then prepared the way for the return of God’s glory on the day of Pentecost, when He came to inhabit His people—the new temple. This established a precedent for a parallel event in our time, when the glory of God will fill the temple in a greater way ([Rev. 15:8](#)) at the feast of Tabernacles. This is prophesied later in connection with the fall of Babylon in [Rev. 18:1](#), where another angel comes down from heaven, “*and the earth was illumined with his glory.*”

The sixth bowl prepares the way for the seventh. The wine is poured out in judgment upon Babylon, while the water is poured out so that the people may drink from the “spiritual rock” which is Christ. This spiritual drink is the water of the word, for Jesus said in [John 15:3](#) that we are cleansed, or purified, by the word which He has spoken to us. Under the Old Covenant, people were cleansed by literal water; under the New Covenant, we are cleansed by the water of the word.

The Angel of Pure Influence is thus sent to counteract the “bad influence” of Mystery Babylon. The pure water of life coming from the throne of God in [Rev. 22:1](#) is the antidote to the polluted water of Babylonian influence, culture, and values. So [Psalm 81:8–10](#) says,

⁸ Hear, O My people, and I will admonish you; O Israel, if you would listen to Me! ⁹ Let there be no strange god among you, nor shall you worship any foreign god. ¹⁰ I, the Lord, am your God, who brought you up from the land of Egypt; open your mouth wide and I will fill it.

The passage focuses primarily on feeding Israel with the word of God. The psalmist laments the fact that “*My people did not listen to My voice*” ([Psalm 81:11](#)). [Psalm 81:16](#) concludes the passage by saying,

¹⁶ But I would feed you with the finest of the wheat; and with honey from the rock I would satisfy you.

The spiritual rock, then, was said to feed Israel not only with water, but with wheat and with honey. These are all metaphors for the word of God in different ways. Water cleanses; wheat strengthens, and honey removes spiritual blindness, enlightening the eyes ([1 Sam. 14:27](#)). All of these aspects of the word are part of the job description of the Angel of Pure Influence.

Even as Israel of old was spiritually blind during its sojourn in the wilderness ([Deut. 29:4](#)), so also has the Pentecostal church in the wilderness been blind. Neither Israel nor the church has lacked faith to come out of Egypt (Passover-level faith that justifies). Israel, however, refused to hear the word ([Exodus 20:18–21](#)) at Pentecost when the law was given. Later, the New Testament church was able to receive the word of Pentecost in the second chapter of Acts. This showed progress, but the church under Pentecost was not ready to receive the message of Tabernacles, which is the greatest anointing and revelation of the word. This remains for the overcomers at the end of the age.

It is apparent that the Angel of Pure Influence presides over the revelation accompanying this final outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which will overturn the evil influence of Babylonian culture that has warped the hearts and minds of the people in our time.

Amalek and Babylon

There are two events in Exodus 17. The first is the water coming out of the rock. The second, in [Exodus 17:8–16](#), is the overthrow of Amalek, which in this case serves as a representative of Mystery Babylon. Just as Amalek's name was to be blotted out ([Exodus 17:14](#)), so also Babylon was to be *“thrown down with violence, and will not be found any longer”* ([Rev. 18:21](#)). Amalek established the early pattern for Babylon in the context of the time between Passover and Pentecost. Babylon's fall is greater, and it comes in the context of the feast of Tabernacles.

If Amalek had won the battle in Moses' day, the people would not have experienced Pentecost at Mount Sinai ten days later. If Babylon should win in our time, the people will not experience the fulness of the Spirit at the feast of Tabernacles. Thankfully, John tells us in [Rev. 16:12](#) that God has raised up the kings from the east to overthrow Babylon.

Amalek was the son of Eliphaz, the son of Esau-Edom ([Genesis 36:16](#)). Hence, the prophecies concerning Edom apply also to Amalek. Eliphaz, whose name means “my god is fine gold,” shows how the love of money rules these people. It also provides us with Amalek's motive in attacking Israel as they came out of Egypt. The Amalekites wanted to steal the wealth that Israel brought with them out of Egypt ([Exodus 12:35](#)).

The Kings from the East

[Rev. 16:12](#) tells us that the sixth angel is called to pour out his bowl of wine upon the Euphrates River. This dries up the river and prepares the way for the kings from the east. This verse tells us that the fall of Babylon in Daniel's time had established a prophetic pattern for the fall of Mystery Babylon in our time.

During the days of Daniel, the kings from the east (King Cyrus of Persia and King Darius of Media) dried up the River Euphrates by diverting the water from the River Euphrates that flowed through the city of Babylon. There were walls on either side of the river with huge gates to allow people in and out of the city. Normally, these gates were closed and locked during a siege and at night, but on the night the Medes and Persians took the city, the Babylonian priests left a gate open. They were angry with King Belshazzar for making their god (Marduk) equal with the other official gods of Babylon. This was how the city was taken during the palace party mentioned in [Dan. 5:1](#).

Thus, drying up the River Euphrates was the final prophetic act that led to the conquest of Babylon. So this became the pattern for the fall of Mystery Babylon in Revelation 16. One cannot truly understand the events of the sixth and seventh bowls in Revelation 16 without knowing some of the history of ancient Babylon and how the city fell in Daniel 5.

In fact, because so many Bible teachers are ignorant of history, they interpret the kings of the east in a negative manner. Many interpret this verse to mean that China will send an army across the Mideast to destroy the Israeli state. But if that were so, then the Israeli state would have to be Babylon. Certainly, it is part of the Babylonian system today—and, in fact, it is the modern representative of Edom and Amalek, as I have shown elsewhere. But Babylon is much bigger than the Israeli state, for it is a worldwide political and economic system.

The main thing to understand is that the kings from the east are God's agents raised up to overthrow Babylon—not to threaten God's people, but to set them free. It was Cyrus who issued the edict in 534 B.C. allowing the Judeans to return to their old land and to reconstruct a temple in Jerusalem. A later edict in 458 B.C. by King Artaxerxes sent Nehemiah to rebuild Jerusalem, beginning the final 490-year countdown toward the Messiah's death on the cross.

Cyrus is God's "Messiah"

[Isaiah 44:27](#) to 45:1 says,

²⁷ It is I who says to the depth of the sea, 'Be dried up!' And I will make your rivers dry. ²⁸ It is I who says of Cyrus, 'He is My shepherd! And he will perform all My desire.' And he declares of Jerusalem, 'She will be built,' and of the temple, 'Your foundation will be laid.'

¹ Thus says the Lord to Cyrus [Heb. *Koresh*, "the Furnace-Fire" (i.e., The Sun)] His anointed [Heb. *Messiah*, "Messiah"], Whom I have taken by the right hand to subdue nations before him

This passage makes it clear that King Cyrus of Persia was God's "shepherd" and "His anointed" one ("Messiah"). That is, he is a type of Christ insofar as He was the conqueror of Babylon. His anointing from God authorized him "*to subdue nations.*" Though Cyrus was not a believer in Yahweh, he did what God called him to do, saying to Jerusalem, "*She will be built,*" and giving orders to lay the foundations of the second temple ([Isaiah 44:28](#)).

[Isaiah 44:27](#) also says, "*And I will make your rivers dry.*" This was fulfilled when the River Euphrates was dried up in order to allow the invading army to capture Babylon.

Diverting the River Euphrates

When [Rev. 16:12](#) speaks of the kings from the east drying up the Euphrates River, many interpret this in a negative way, as if this is a threat to God's people. But, in fact, this is the final stage of preparation by which God overthrows Babylon. The ancient kings of the east were Cyrus and Darius, who ruled the Medes and Persians, to whom God had given the city ([Dan. 5:28](#)). The modern "kings" of this prophetic pattern are China and Russia, who have formed an alliance to overthrow "Babylon" that currently rules from its bases of power in the West.

Like Cyrus and Darius, the modern kings probably have little or no awareness of their role in prophecy. Yet those who understand the divine plan see their rise and have no fear of them, knowing that God is using them to set His people free from their Babylonian captivity. By contrast, most evangelical Christians are being taught to fear China and Russia. Perhaps in Daniel's day too there were Judahites who were alarmed when the Medes and Persians laid siege to their great city, Babylon. Some may have joined the Babylonian army to fight God's anointed one. For this reason, it is important to know the divine plan, and we today must understand the meaning of [Rev. 16:12](#).

Cyrus came to power in 550 B.C., as the rising of "The Sun." Next, he overthrew the thrones of Media and Lydia (546 B.C.). Finally, his army diverted the river Euphrates in order to enter the city of Babylon through the river (537 B.C.) Last, this led to the conquest of Babylon, the city that was ruled spiritually by "*the prince of the power of the air*" ([Eph. 2:2](#)). Hence, the seventh bowl of wine was poured "*upon the air*" ([Rev. 16:17](#)).

Queen Nitocris was the mother of the biblical Belshazzar ([Daniel 5:1](#)). On the night Babylon fell, when the hand wrote on the palace wall, it was this queen who remembered Daniel and called him out of retirement to interpret the writing on the wall.

Babylon had been built on both sides of the Euphrates River, but for security reasons, walls had to be built which divided and separated the two halves of the city. People had to use boats to ferry the people across the river. Queen Nitocris saw the obvious problem and wanted to build a bridge over the Euphrates to connect the two halves of Babylon.

She had her workmen dig a huge basin 47 miles in circumference just north of the city. At the same time, she prepared large stones for the bridge. When all was ready, a canal was dug upstream from the river to the basin, and the water was diverted. This allowed them to set the stones in the dry river bed to build the bridge over the Euphrates. No doubt Cyrus remembered this many years later.

Description of Babylon

Babylon was a city foursquare with each side nearly 14 miles in length and a total circumference of 56 miles. The wall itself was 85 feet thick and 300 feet high. The ancient Greek historian, Herodotus, known as the “Father of History,” tells us in Book 1 of The Histories,

“On the top of the wall they constructed, along each edge, a row of one-roomed buildings facing inwards with enough space between for a four-horse chariot to pass. There are a hundred gates in the circuit of the wall, all of bronze and bronze uprights and lintels.”

When Cyrus and Darius came to conquer Babylon, they met with little success at first. Herodotus tells us,

“The siege dragged on, no progress was made, and Cyrus was beginning to despair of success. Then somebody suggested or he himself thought up the following plan: he stationed part of his force at the point where the Euphrates flows into the city and another contingent at the opposite end where it flows out, with orders to both to force an entrance along the river-bed as soon as they saw that the water was shallow enough. Then, taking with him all his non-combatant troops, he withdrew to the spot where Nitocris had excavated the lake (which was then a marsh) and in this way [reopening the canal] so greatly reduced the depth of water in the actual bed of the river that it became fordable, and the Persian army, which had been left at Babylon for the purpose, entered the river, now only deep enough to reach about the middle of a man’s thigh, and, making their way along it, got into the town

The Babylonians themselves say that owing to the great size of the city the outskirts were captured without the people in the centre knowing anything about it; there was a festival going on, and they continued to dance and enjoy themselves, until they learned the news the hard way. That, then, is the story of the first capture of Babylon.”

But the fall of Babylon itself is the subject of the seventh bowl, so for now, we must confine our remarks to the sixth bowl upon the Euphrates—the prelude to the fall of Babylon.

The Meaning of Euphrates

The Euphrates was the life blood of Babylon. Along with the Tigris River, the water was the only reason that Babylon and other cities could be built in the desert of Mesopotamia, “the land between two rivers.” The name *Euphrates* means “fruitfulness.” It comes from the same root word as found in the Hebrew name *Ephraim*, “double fruitfulness.”

Modern Mystery Babylon, of course, is no longer a single city, but a worldwide economic and political system. As such, it no longer requires the Euphrates River as its life blood. Modern Babylon’s “Euphrates” is its banking system. The river banks of the Euphrates are now the banks that hold money that is also called “liquidity.”

For this reason, the final form of the beast system is the beast arising from the earth ([Rev. 13:11](#)), and it is described in financial and economic terms. When Babylon falls, [Rev. 18:11–15](#) pictures “*the merchants of the earth*” weeping

over the loss of world trade. And in [Rev. 18:14](#) God speaks to the merchants, saying, “*the fruit you long for has gone from you.*” In other words, the “Euphrates” becomes fruitless. The banks lose their liquidity and go bankrupt.

These merchants weep because Babylon has made them rich, and the fall of their city has caused them to lose this wealth. [Rev. 18:17](#) tells us, “*in one hour such great wealth has been laid waste!*”

So when Cyrus dried up the river, he established a prophetic pattern that is fulfilled today by attacks upon the financial markets and world trade. This became apparent more than twenty years ago at the start of our Jubilee Prayer Campaign (Nov. 21–29, 1993).

God’s Answer to Prayer

The first major sign, taken from the story of Nebuchadnezzar’s downfall in Daniel 4, was given to us precisely twelve months into the Jubilee Prayer Campaign on Nov. 29, 1994. In those days the word of the Lord revealed that this prayer campaign was following the pattern of Daniel 4, which is the story of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of the great “tree” that was defoliated and chopped down. This dream was fulfilled precisely twelve months later ([Dan. 4:29](#)).

Therefore, we knew that we were to watch twelve months from the Jubilee Prayer Campaign on Nov. 29, 1993 to the same date in 1994. I was living in Washington state at this time, and one of our senators was the Speaker of the House, Tom Foley. In the days before the mid-term election in early November 1994, I heard from Foley’s opponents that they wanted to “de-Foley-ate Washington.” Instantly, I knew that they would succeed, because it was the sign in [Dan. 4:14](#) that we were to expect: “*Chop down the tree and cut off its branches.*”

Indeed, Tom Foley was defeated by George Nethercutt (“a lower cut”). The great “tree” of Babylon was defoliated and cut down. In the biblical story, Nebuchadnezzar himself was given twelve months in which to repent, but instead his heart was lifted up in pride, and when he bragged about his great accomplishments ([Dan. 4:29](#)), his prophetic dream was fulfilled. He was cast off the throne for “seven times” ([Dan. 4:16](#), [32](#)).

When Tom Foley was defeated by George Nethercutt, we knew that the tree was being chopped down. Understanding this historical precedent, we waited to see what God would do a few weeks later on Nov. 29, 1994.

About that time, the House began to debate the GATT treaty (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade). It then passed the House on Nov. 29, 1994. As Speaker of the House, Tom Foley then gave a final speech bragging about their accomplishments and resigned as Speaker of the House. This was Nov. 29, 1994, precisely twelve months after the Jubilee Prayer Campaign.

The pattern set by Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled perfectly.

In the prayer campaign of 1993, the overcomers took Babylon to the divine court and won their case against Babylon. Essentially, our complaint against Babylon was that it had failed to fulfill its divine responsibility to bring righteousness to the earth in exchange for receiving the Dominion Mandate. We petitioned the divine court for the Dominion Mandate to be given to the overcomers—that is, the saints of the Most High ([Dan. 7:22](#)).

Legally speaking, it was like buying urban property, because Babylon is a city. For this reason, the city was given one year in which to redeem itself according to the provision of the law in [Lev. 25:30](#). In other words, Babylon was given a full year in which to bring forth righteousness to fulfill their responsibility and obligation. When they failed a year later, we saw the sign that the “tree” of Babylon was being stripped of its leaves (“de-Foley-ated”) and then chopped down with a lower cut (“Nethercutt”).

Since that time, we knew that Babylon would soon collapse and that the saints of the Most High would be given the Kingdom. But this could not take place until after 2014, when Babylon’s “seven times” mandate actually expired. We would have to wait another 20 years.

Meanwhile, we discerned that the divine plan was to overthrow Babylon by a shift in world trade. The GATT treaty was the precursor to the World Trade Organization, which has become the main Babylonian Trade Club. The GATT treaty in 1994 admitted China to this Trade Club, and *this was the start of the greatest transfer of wealth from West to East in the history of the world.*

The US trade imbalance with China soon reached \$40–50 billion per month. Huge ships arrived at American ports filled with goods from China, and they returned nearly empty. This “free trade” was good for big corporations, as it allowed them to produce goods freely using cheap labor in China (and other countries). However, it also served to destroy the US labor market and the economy as a whole, as wealth was transferred to China.

China then began to rise very quickly, and its new wealth soon allowed it to challenge the hegemony of the US Empire and (from a biblical perspective) to overthrow Mystery Babylon.

When the GATT treaty was passed in 1994, we knew that this was God’s answer to the Jubilee Prayer Campaign. It was *a decree from the throne* that Babylon would be overthrown by the kings from the east. Some politicians and economists now see how “free trade” has facilitated the rise of China and the demise of the western nations, and they are alarmed. But almost none of them understand the divine plan in this. Hence, they are sounding the alarm and promoting fear of China and Russia, without knowing that God has raised up the modern kings from the east to set His people free. God is overthrowing Babylon by diverting its source of fruitfulness (money in the banks).

Pouring out the Sixth Bowls in 2005

We were led to pour out the sixth bowls of water and wine into the Colorado River at Fruita, Colorado on Sept. 26, 2005. We did this immediately after holding a Tabernacles conference in Denver, Colorado. God did not require us to go to Iraq to pour out the wine into the Euphrates River. For spiritual purposes, the town of *Fruita* suited the purpose, since the meaning of the name was the same as *Euphrates*, and the town is known for its orchards and fruit.

As I poured out the wine into the river, I spoke the word attributed by Isaiah to King Cyrus, “*Be dry*” ([Isaiah 44:27](#)). As usual, we expected to see the results of this decree begin to unfold in the coming year.

One notable event took place the following June (2006).

God is Able Prayer Campaign (June 15–18, 2006)

The essence of this prayer campaign was stated in part of our prayer at that time:

“Father, because many have said You are not able to bring this people into the Promised Land ([Num. 14:16](#)), I ask that you fulfill your vow ([Num. 14:21](#)), where You swore to Moses, “As I live, all the earth will be filled with the glory of the Lord.”

This was connected to the bowl of water that we had poured out in Fruita some months earlier in September 2005.

On the last day of this prayer campaign (June 18, 2006), my wife and I drove through Waterloo, Iowa on the way home from Springfield, Illinois, where we had picked up two grandchildren who would stay with us for two weeks. Our three-day prayer campaign inadvertently fell on the anniversary of the famous Battle of Waterloo (June 15–18, 1815), which was a major turning point in the history of Europe. June 18, 1815 marked the end of Napoleon’s career, for he was defeated by British general, Wellington, at Waterloo.

So we found ourselves driving through Waterloo, Iowa on the last day of *God is Able* prayer campaign on the anniversary of Napoleon’s defeat at Waterloo. We were led to declare victory over Apollyon. (Napoleon called himself *Neo-Apollyon*.)

The Brexit Vote in 2016

We always watch for “echoes” that often occur ten years after important events, according to the Hezekiah Factor. Hence, June 15–18, 2016 was a time to watch, and this coincided also with the 15-year Hezekiah Extension from June 19, 2001, when we held another prayer campaign known as *We Accept Your New Covenant Marriage Proposal*. At the time of that prayer campaign, we received revelation that its date of June 19 was prophetically adjusted to June 23, though the divine reason for this was unknown for ten years.

The bottom line is that June 23, 2016 was the Brexit vote, where Great Britain voted to leave (“divorce”) the European Union. This European Union was first conceived by Napoleon, who attempted to accomplish this “union” by military force. After his defeat in 1815, the “Holy Alliance” met to redraw the map of Europe, and they also began to plan for a European Union based on peaceful negotiations. (This finally became a reality in 1958.)

However, the Brexit now threatens the very existence of the EU itself, and our prayer campaign ten years earlier (in 2006) suggests that another “Waterloo” has taken place. It seems to mark the end of the “Holy Alliance” after 201 years (1815–2016).

Since the EU’s logo is an unfinished picture of the Tower of Babel, we can see that this Tower of Babel was first conceived in 1815 in conjunction with the rise of the beast from the earth in [Rev. 13:11](#). But June 23, 2006 seems to mark the beginning of the end, when God began to scatter the rebellious people by confounding their tongues ([Gen. 11:7–9](#)).

Chapter 8: The Three Frogs

[Revelation 16:13, 14](#) says,

¹³ And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs; ¹⁴ for they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them together for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty.

Revelation 16 correlates prophetically with the 16th letter of the Hebrew alphabet, the *ayin*, which means “an eye.” It has to do with seeing, looking, or manifestation. In verses 1 and 7, John wrote “*and I heard*,” but in verse 13 this changes to “*and I saw*.” So verse 13 brings us to some sort of high point in this chapter that correlates with the *ayin*.

[Psalm 81:6–16](#), which was sung as the sixth bowls were poured out in the temple, is instructive in regard to [Rev. 16:13](#) and [14](#). [Psalm 81:9, 10](#) says,

⁹ let there be no strange god among you, nor shall you worship any foreign god. ¹⁰ I, the Lord, am your God, who brought you up from the land of Egypt; open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.

When men are induced by the beast and the false prophet to worship the dragon, God says “*let there be no strange god among you*.” When John sees three unclean spirits, pictured as frogs, coming out of the mouth of these three evil entities, the antidote is to “*open your mouth wide*” so that the true God can fill it with His words that are inspired by the Holy Spirit. In [Psalm 81:16](#) God says, “*I would feed you with the finest of the wheat... and with honey from the rock.*”

However, [Psalm 81:11](#) says, “*But My people did not listen to My voice.*” Because Israel failed to listen to the voice of God, they came under divine judgment, and God put them under the authority of the beast ([Psalm 81:12](#)). Because most of them were ill equipped to resist the voice of the dragon, they succumbed to the temptation of greed—the root of all evil—and thus received the mark of the beast.

The Unholy Triumvirate

The dragon in Revelation 16 is no doubt the same as the red dragon in [Rev. 12:9](#), where he is called “*the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world.*” He is the head of the evil triumvirate, for in [Rev. 13:2](#) we read that the beast from the sea was given power and his throne, along with great authority, by the dragon himself.

Therefore, the beast from the sea, who is also the little horn, was authorized by the dragon to exercise authority in the earth. He who authorizes is greater than the one being authorized.

Likewise, in [Rev. 13:11](#) the banking beast from the earth “*spoke as a dragon*” and was therefore some sort of spokesman, or “prophet” of the dragon. This banking beast, then, is the “false prophet” of [Revelation 16:13](#). This is, perhaps, unexpected, since the beast from the sea is religious in nature, while the beast from the earth is secular and financial.

Nonetheless, it is the earth beast who “*performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men*” ([Rev. 13:13](#)). We have already identified this particular sign as nuclear bombs dropped by jet bombers and also “hellfire” missiles widely used in modern warfare. These were developed by governments under the control of the money powers, the wealthy banking families.

When this unholy trinity is finally defeated, [Rev. 19:20](#) says,

²⁰ And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone.

Here the false prophet is identified directly with the earth beast. Therefore, the other beast that was seized is the sea beast. He is referred to as “the beast” because he is the main beast known as the little horn. “These two” are the first to be overthrown, as verse 20 tells us, and then soon afterward the dragon himself is bound by an angel with “*a great chain*” ([Rev. 20:1–3](#)).

So the triumvirate is the dragon (Satan), the beast (Vatican), and the false prophet (banking system). Out of the mouth of these come “*unclean spirits like frogs*,” persuasive words and policies that are designed to bring the kings of the world together to “Har-Magedon” (NASB), or “Armageddon” (KJV).

The Unclean Spirits

The unclean spirits are pictured figuratively as frogs. This makes a connection to the plague on Egypt in [Exodus 8:5, 6](#),

⁵ Then the Lord said to Moses, “Say to Aaron, ‘Stretch out your hand with your staff over the rivers, over the streams and over the pools, and make frogs come up on the land of Egypt.’” ⁶ So Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt, and the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt.

Even as the frogs came up from the Nile River in Egypt, so also in Revelation 16 the three frogs seem to come up from the River Euphrates after the sixth angel poured out his “plague” upon the river. For those studying the prophetic meaning of the ten plagues on Egypt, it should be helpful to know that frogs signify unclean spirits, false teachings, or destructive ideologies, which often lead to war. Deceptive propaganda stirs the passions of otherwise peaceful people, causing them to support wars which only increase the debt of the people and increase power of their hidden masters.

The unclean spirit of the beast is mostly the doctrine of hell and eternal torment. It causes even Christians to turn upon one another and to persecute so-called heretics, dissenters, and anyone who believes differently. For centuries (until 1869) the Church burned people at the stake. They justified their cruelty by claiming that God approved of eternal torment, so a few extra moments of inflicted torment was well within the bounds of divine justice.

Their religious doctrine justified cruelty, because they mistakenly believed that they worshiped a cruel God. Countless religious wars have been fought on account of this misperception, and each declaration of war by government decree was thought to justify cruelty, murder and unrighteous war.

The unclean spirit of the false prophet—that is the Babylonian banking system—teaches that war is justified by economic considerations, based on the love of money. Hence, when Saddam Hussein decided to allow oil sales to be paid in euros, rather than in US dollars, the Babylonian leaders declared war on him. Government propaganda mobilized the people to support the war on the grounds that Saddam Hussein was a bad man, but it had no problem supporting him prior to the time that he committed his unpardonable sin by accepting other currencies in payment of oil.

The unclean spirit of the dragon—Satan—seems to stand above the other two and is more general. If we look at the motive of the red dragon in Revelation 12, it is designed to prevent Christ from taking His rightful place as King of the earth. So the dragon attempted to devour the Christ-child as soon as He was born ([Rev. 12:4](#)). Secondly, when that failed, he declared war on the “woman” (church) and on her seed—the saints who form the body of Christ ([Rev. 12:17](#)).

The dragon, then, spreads hatred against Christ, the church, and the overcomers in the attempt to raise up religious persecution against his great rival, Jesus Christ. The dragon’s desire is to remain “*the ruler of this world*” ([John 12:31](#)).

The Battle for World Control

The serpent, or dragon, received this authority at the beginning by divine decree on account of Adam's sin. God appeared to lose that which He owned by right of creation. But Adam could only lose what had been given him—and no more. Adam had been given authority, but not sovereignty. His authority over the earth made him a steward, not an owner. Therefore, the “sale” of the earth could not be permanent. The law says that the land could not be sold permanently ([Lev. 25:23](#)). Laws of redemption and Jubilee limit sales of God's property to 49 years. In the end, God will reclaim all that He has lost.

The laws of creation were written and established by God alone. These laws will always work for His benefit in the long run. The law will never demand or even allow God to lose anything. You might say that He “stacked the deck” in His own favor. He wrote the rules of engagement so that any loss He suffered would be temporary.

Biblical history is primarily the story of mankind during the time of redemption leading to the final Jubilee, when all inheritance is restored to the original owners. And so the overthrow of the unholy triumvirate at the end of the first “work week” of history (i.e., 6,000 years) comes with the fall of Babylon, followed by the Sabbath Millennium, where the earth is given a rest from its labor.

The next work week at the start of the eighth millennium, begins with the Great White Throne judgment, wherein all past generations of mankind are raised from the dead and placed under the “fiery law” ([Deut. 33:2 KJV](#)) in order that they might learn righteousness ([Isaiah 26:9](#)).

The bottom line, however, is that the three unclean spirits appear to be unrighteous motivational ideologies or teachings by which a triumvirate of demonic power attempts to withstand Christ in His second coming. The basic motive is hatred.

This hatred finds its expression in secondary motives through the beast and the false prophet. The beast, which is the little horn, is the church of Rome. It expresses the dragon's hatred of Christ by its doctrine of eternal torment and by its policy of killing “infidels” and torturing “heretics,” along with general acts of unkindness toward those who do not submit fully to the religious hierarchy. This runs contrary to both love and justice that are rooted in His very nature.

The way that Israel expressed their hatred of Christ was by rejecting His direct rule and desiring a man to rule over them. When the people demanded a king, God told the prophet in [1 Sam. 8:7](#), “*they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them.*” Following their example, the Jewish leaders in the New Testament said in their hearts, “*We do not want this man to reign over us*” ([Luke 19:14](#)).

All three “frogs” are rooted in hatred for Jesus Christ, not wanting Him to claim His rightful place as King of the earth. The main difference is that while the leaders are quite aware of their hatred of Christ, most of the average people who are influenced by their leaders are unaware of it. Lacking spiritual discernment, they blindly support their leaders in their war against Jesus Christ.

The deeper truth, however, is that the sixth angel has poured out his bowl of wine upon the Euphrates, causing these “frogs” to swarm the land at the end of the age. In the book of Exodus, the frogs were brought out of the Nile when Aaron held up his staff according to divine command. God is the first cause and has full control over the outcome. Hence, the “frogs” can never defeat Jesus Christ.

The triumvirate of these unclean spirits is blinded by hatred and limited in its understanding. Do they really think that they might actually win this battle? No, for [Rev. 12:12](#) says that when the dragon was cast down to the earth, he has “*great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time.*” Likewise, when Jesus cast out the demons in the country of the Gadarenes, we read in [Matt. 8:29](#),

29 And behold, they cried out, saying, “What do we have to do with You, Son of God? Have You come here to torment [imprison] us before the time?”

They know that they cannot win, and yet they fight to prolong their freedom to rule the earth and to influence mankind to do evil. But in the end, their “frogs” can only bring the world to the great turning point of history, where they will be defeated—as they already know.

Chapter 9: Supporting Armageddon

In view of the three unclean spirits (teachings or ideologies) that motivate men to fight against God at the battle of Armageddon, Jesus interrupts the narrative and interjects His own warning in [Rev. 16:15](#),

¹⁵ (“Behold, I am coming like a thief. Blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his garments, lest he walk about naked and men see his shame.”)

In other words, if one wants to avoid being led by one of these three unclean spirits, he must stay awake and keep his garments. Conversely, this implies that those who “*walk about naked*” are the ones who are led by the false ideologies to fight in Armageddon or to urge others to fight in that battle.

Watchmen on the Walls

The metaphor of keeping one’s garments is described by Alfred Edersheim in his book, [The Temple](#), pages 142, 143,

“Perhaps one of the most striking instances of this kind is afforded by the words quoted at the head of this chapter—‘Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments.’ They literally describe, as we learn from the Rabbis, the punishment awarded to the Temple-guards if found asleep at their posts; and the Rabbinical account of it is curiously confirmed by the somewhat naïve confession of one of their number, that on a certain occasion his own maternal uncle had actually undergone the punishment of having his clothes set on fire by the captain of the Temple as he went his rounds at night.”

Edersheim was referring to a story told by Rabbi Elieser ben Jacob (*Middoth*, i. 2), whose uncle’s clothing had been burned by the captain.

[Rev. 16:15](#) applies not only to temple guards, but to all who claim to be believers. [Rev. 3:2, 3](#) admonishes the church of Sardis to “*wake up*,” or to be watchful. All share in some responsibility as watchmen on the walls, though only a few have that specific calling in life. In this metaphor, Jesus is the Captain of the Temple making his rounds at night. Those guards who have fallen asleep—not in death, but in failing to be watchful—will be found “naked.” While they sleep, Jesus will burn their garments, so to speak.

[Isaiah 56:10](#) prophesies of blind (sleeping) watchmen, comparing them in the same verse to “*dumb dogs unable to bark*.”

¹⁰ His watchmen are blind, all of them know nothing. All of them are dumb dogs unable to bark, dreamers lying down, who love to slumber.

Dogs are normally good watchmen, as they bark when potential danger approaches. But Israel’s watchmen were blind, knowing nothing, much like dumb dogs and dreamers who love sleep. [Isaiah 56:11, 12](#) continues,

¹¹ And the dogs are greedy, they are not satisfied. And they are shepherds who have no understanding; they have all turned to their own way, each one to his unjust gain, to the last one. ¹² “Come,” they say, “let us get wine, and let us drink heavily of strong drink; and tomorrow will be like today, only more so.”

Isaiah identifies these watchmen as “*shepherds who have no understanding*.” When danger of divine judgment approaches, they do not recognize the danger and therefore do nothing to enlighten the people. The true prophets of God in Scripture all understood that Israel and Judah were in danger on account of their lawlessness, their disobedience, and their rebellion against the covenant. But most of the leaders in Isaiah’s time were part of the problem and were not fulfilling their calling as watchmen or shepherds.

Jesus' warning in [Rev. 16:15](#) shows that this problem has persisted to the present time, and this is the reason that so many people are led to support the battle of Armageddon.

Zionism

Most Bible teachers today would probably agree that the battle of Armageddon is fought over control of the "Holy Land." Jews want it, Islamic people want it, and Christians want the Jews to own it, thinking that Jesus will rule the coming Kingdom from a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem. All three are motivated by Old Covenant religion, whether they realize it or not.

Jews obviously want to reestablish Old Covenant religion, and certain groups have already prepared the materials to rebuild the temple and have trained Levitical priests to offer animal sacrifices again.

Islamists want the site, for they say that Muhammed ascended to heaven from "the farthest mosque" (Masjid al-Aqsa), which was interpreted by his biographer to mean the temple mount in Jerusalem.

Christians have come to support the Jewish effort, since the 1800's, when Dispensationalist teachings of Darby and Scofield deceived believers into thinking that the "age of grace" would end and the "age of law" would resume. The "age of law" was a misleading label, of course, because they had no understanding of the law and its place in the Kingdom. To them, it meant that sacrifices would resume, and Old Covenant worship would be reinstated.

They also taught that Jesus Christ would become the high priest over Levitical priests, complete with all of the Old Covenant rituals set forth under Moses and Aaron.

Of course, we know that Jesus was of Judah, not Levi, and was therefore not eligible as a priest—much less a *high* priest—of that order ([Heb. 7:14](#)). The Melchizedek Order has permanently replaced the Levitical Order, even as Christ's death on the cross has permanently replaced all animal sacrifices.

Darby and Scofield essentially taught that New Covenant Christianity was a temporary interruption of the Old Covenant where the Age of Grace was to last about 2,000 years. They believed that the physical children of Abraham (whom they identified as the Jews) temporarily lost the right to rule the earth, but that this right would be restored to them in the Kingdom Age.

Along with this came the belief that the Jews would soon repent and then return to the old land as believers in Christ. Of course, the return took place, but without their repentance. So Dispensationalism has been modified from its original tenets in order to induce Christians to support Zionism as a fulfillment of Bible prophecy.

Supporting Zionism

The Dispensationalist support of Zionism has served to create Christian Zionists who feel compelled to support the rebuilding of a physical temple and the reinstatement of animal sacrifices. They also support the most rabid and cruel policies against the Palestinians, treating them as if they were ancient Canaanites that must be killed or expelled from their homeland. Somehow they think that this is what Jesus would do.

Furthermore, Christian leaders often support the most radical Jewish leaders and even criticize the Jewish state for not exterminating the Palestinians. They take Joshua's conquest of Canaan as their model, rather than Jesus' method of conquering the world.

Dispensationalism tends to make a distinction between Jews and all others, even giving each its own moral standard. For Jews, morality is thought to be based on the Old Covenant and its interpretation of the law. For Christians, morality is thought to be based on lawlessness which they mistakenly believe is a feature of the New Covenant. This doctrine of two moral systems only creates a double standard in the Kingdom of God. Jews are allowed to establish their own

standard of morality, based on what is good for Jews, while “gentiles” must be more loving among themselves, while supporting Jewish interests, however ungodly these interests may be.

Some Dispensationalists went so far as to separate the Christian inheritance from the Jewish inheritance. Christians were to inherit heaven, while Jews were to inherit the earth. This was their way of explaining and justifying the double standard which they had created in the Kingdom of God. Virtually all of them seemed to forget that Christ had come to abolish the dividing wall that had been erected in the temple, separating people into racial categories as “chosen” or “non-chosen” people ([Eph. 2:15, 16](#)).

Worse yet, many Christian Zionists do all in their power to provoke Armageddon in the mistaken belief that they can force Christ to return to save the Jews from extinction. Jews are happy to accept Christian support and money, but they resent the Christian motive.

Dual Covenant Theology

Christian Zionism is now evolving into a movement where Christians are beginning to think that Jews are saved apart from Christ. Their salvation, they say, is based on adhering to Judaism and its Old Covenant religion. This is known as Dual Covenant Theology.

John Hagee has written a book, *In Defense of Israel*, saying that Jesus did not come the first time to be the Messiah (Christ), which seems to make Peter’s confession pointless when He proclaimed, “*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God*” ([Matt. 16:16](#)). Such a view attempts to defend the Jews’ rejection of Jesus as the Messiah. If Jesus did not really come the first time to be the Messiah, then somehow the Jews were justified in rejecting Him, and this lessens their accountability before God.

If John Hagee had lived in the time of David, his book would have been entitled: *In Defense of Absalom*. His “defense” would have been that it was in the divine plan for David to be overthrown, so Absalom should be supported by all the people. Further, he would have argued that David was not really the “anointed one” (Messiah) until he returned to the throne—which pictures the second coming of Christ. And then, of course, his book would have ended with Absalom and his followers ruling the Kingdom as honored officials in David’s court.

We know from the biblical account that this is not what happened—nor will it happen when Christ returns to reclaim the throne that was usurped. John Hagee, and others like him, simply do not understand the biblical story of Absalom, nor does he know how to apply it in the conflict over the right to rule. This is how preachers end up supporting the wrong side, betraying Jesus who they claim as their friend.

There are many aspects of Christian Zionism that play into this lack of understanding. All of these things have their role in causing Christians to support the move toward the battle of Armageddon. I am not so concerned about unclean spirits that motivate Jews and Muslims to fight this battle, but I am concerned about the role of Christians. All men are in need of the truth, but Christians ought to have a better understanding of the New Covenant and of biblical prophecy.

The Judas Factor

Judas betrayed Jesus, not because he hated Jesus, but because he wanted to force Him into a position where He would perform a great miracle to prove that He was the Messiah. He hoped that if Jesus were condemned to be crucified, it would force Him to do a great miracle that would show forth His power and majesty, convincing the people that He was indeed the Messiah. Judas did not understand His prophetic role as Ahithophel, who had betrayed King David a thousand years earlier when Absalom overthrew him ([2 Sam. 15:12, 31](#)).

Judas did have faith in Jesus, but his lack of understanding caused him to betray Jesus. When his plan backfired, and the realization came to him that Jesus was not going to come off the cross, he was so remorseful that he hanged himself ([Matt. 27:3, 4, 5](#)). He followed the prophetic example of Ahithophel, who also hanged himself ([2 Sam. 17:23 KJV](#)).

Absalom's revolt against David with the help of Ahithophel prophesied of the chief priests overthrowing Jesus with the help of Judas. Judas was Jesus' "friend" ([Matt. 26:50](#); [John 13:18](#)), even as Ahithophel had been David's friend ([Psalm 41:9](#)). Yet Judas betrayed Jesus. Why? Because he had no understanding, even though he, along with the other disciples, had worked miracles in the name of Jesus ([Luke 10:9, 17](#)).

This story of betrayal, which started with Ahithophel and was fulfilled in the story of Judas, is again being fulfilled in our time in the context of the second coming of Christ. This time Christ is coming as Joseph (with His robe dipped in blood—[Rev. 19:13](#)), and we know that Joseph had been betrayed by his brother Judah (Greek: *Judas*). It was Judah's idea to sell Joseph as a slave ([Gen. 37:26](#)).

In Christ's first coming as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, He was betrayed in the dispute over His right to take the throne of David. Today, however, as we prepare for Christ's second coming, the same story of betrayal is playing out again, but this time the dispute is about the birthright that was given to Joseph ([1 Chron. 5:1, 2](#)).

Who is Jesus' "friend" today who will betray Him? Is it the Jews? No, it is Jesus' disciples—Christian people. Specifically, it is the Christian Zionists who are playing the role of modern Judas, and they are betraying him by siding with those claiming the birthright who hate Jesus Christ. The birthright name is Israel, the name given to Jacob by the angel in [Gen. 32:28](#), which he passed down to the sons of Joseph ([Gen. 48:16](#)).

In 1948 the Jews officially and nationally laid claim to the name Israel, even though they did not represent the tribes of Joseph. Ephraim and Manasseh had been the leading tribes of the House of Israel in the Divided Kingdom. When Israel was deported to Assyria, Judah did not have the right to claim the name Israel, *nor did it until 1948*. In doing so, they usurped the birthright of Joseph with the help of modern Judas, the Christian Zionists. Once again, Jesus has been betrayed in the house of His friends.

Christians who assist the Jewish Zionists, through their lack of prophetic understanding, betray Jesus by pushing the Jews—and, indeed, the whole world—toward Armageddon. For a fuller study of this betrayal, see [Dr. Luke: Healing the Breaches, Book 8, The Climax](#).

See also my book, [The Struggle for the Birthright](#).

While I recognize the inevitability of this insofar as the divine plan is concerned, it is equally true that we are admonished by Jesus Himself to stay awake and to keep our garments. The day will come when great remorse will strike the church—especially Christian Zionists—and they will recognize their betrayal. This, I believe, will fulfill the Day of Atonement in our time.

How much better is it, though, to be compliant with the *will* of God, rather than just to be swept up in the *plan*? Armageddon is the plan, but those watchmen who are awake will not awaken to find their garments "burned," as it were. Those who remain awake will receive their new garments at the time of the First Resurrection.

Chapter 10: The Battle of Armageddon

[Revelation 16:16](#) says,

¹⁶ And they gathered them together to the place which in Hebrew is called Har-Magedon.

Many names have been transliterated from Hebrew into Greek with a few changes. Elijah thus becomes Elias, Judah becomes Judas, and in the case above, Megiddo is written as Magedon. The change in language does not change its original meaning, but we should always keep in mind that Hebrew is being expressed in Greek for the sake of the Greek readers who were unfamiliar with the Hebrew language.

Har means “mountain or hill,” referring to the hill on which the fortress had been built. *Magedon* is “a place of crowds.” The root of *Magedon* is *gadad*, which means either to cut oneself or to gather together (rendezvous) in troops or crowds. As for the city itself, the creator of the Online Bible says,

“ancient city of Canaan assigned to Manasseh and located on the southern rim of the plain of Esdraelon 6 miles (10 km) from Mount Carmel and 11 miles (18 km) from Nazareth.

<https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/lexicon.cfm?strongs=H4023&t=NASB>

Megiddo, or Magedon, had been a Canaanite city ruled by King Taanach ([Joshua 12:21](#)), but after it was conquered by Joshua, its territory was given to the half tribe of Manasseh ([Joshua 17:11](#)). The city was really a walled fortress situated on a strategic hill overlooking the Valley of Jezreel and guarding the pass of Wadi Arah, on the main trade route connecting Egypt with Mesopotamia.

King Josiah

One of the great tragedies of Scripture occurred at Megiddo just before the Babylonian captivity. As the Babylonian armies were advancing toward Israel, the Egyptian army under Pharaoh Neco marched north through Israel to stop them. Their intention was to “*make war at Carchemish on the Euphrates*” ([2 Chron. 35:20](#)). The Babylonians had taken Nineveh in 612 B.C. and were continuing their westward advance. The Egyptians believed it would be better to confront Nebuchadnezzar at the Euphrates, rather than to fight them at the border of Egypt.

Josiah’s army then took a stand against Pharaoh at Megiddo. Pharaoh, who had already bypassed Jerusalem, tried to dissuade Josiah from fighting him, telling him in [2 Chron. 35:21](#),

²¹ ... “I am not coming against you today but against the house with which I am at war, and God has ordered me to hurry. Stop for your own sake from interfering with God who is with me, that He may not destroy you.” ²² However, Josiah would not turn away from him, but disguised himself in order to make war with him; nor did he listen to the words of Neco from the mouth of God, but came to make war on the plain Megiddo.

Josiah was killed needlessly in the battle, and “*then Jeremiah chanted a lament for Josiah*” ([2 Chron. 35:25](#)). The people put his son Joahaz on the throne for three months, while Pharaoh continued his march to Carchemish. The Egyptians were attacked unexpectedly and defeated by the Babylonians, but on the return trip, he took control of Judah. No doubt he was angry with Judah for delaying him and giving the Babylonians time to plan their strategy. So he reversed the will of the people and installed Jehoiakim, the older son of Josiah, on the throne to rule Judah as a vassal king of Egypt.

However, this arrangement lasted only until the Babylonians arrived in 604 B.C., and Jerusalem gave up without a fight.

The point is that Megiddo was a strategic military fortress on the main road from Egypt to Mesopotamia. The most famous biblical battle was where Josiah, the godly king, was needlessly killed on account of his inability to hear the word of the Lord *through an Egyptian king*. It seems that he did not realize that God can speak through anyone, including unbelievers. His lack of discernment caused him to fight Egypt at Megiddo, where he then met his untimely death.

This story is connected to John's prophecy in Revelation 16, where the unclean spirits are pictured as frogs coming out of the mouths of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. The people who are being deceived by these "frogs" obviously lack true spiritual discernment. That problem causes them to be drawn into a battle, where many good people are killed needlessly.

Ahab and Jezebel in Jezreel

Another prophetic story that occurred in the Valley of Jezreel—and thus also by extension involving Megiddo—comes to us when Ahab and Jezebel stole the vineyard of Naboth, the *Jezreelite* ([1 Kings 21:1](#)). This was a prophetic type of men usurping the Kingdom, because in the Song in [Isaiah 5:7](#), "*the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel.*"

Jezreel itself means "God scatters" and "God sows." It is one of the main topics in the prophecies of Hosea, referring to the scattering of Israel into the field in order to "*sow her for Myself in the land*" ([Hosea 1:4](#); [2:23](#)). That, of course, is another large aspect of the prophecy of Jezreel.

Ahab and Jezebel were judged by God for usurping God's Kingdom, and He raised up Jehu to be their executioner.

Naboth means "fruits," showing that Ahab and Jezebel had usurped the fruits of the Kingdom. This ties the story to Jesus' parable in [Matt. 21:33–41](#), where the stewards of God's vineyard usurped its fruits for themselves. They were even willing to kill the prophets and finally the Son Himself to accomplish their goal. The point of that parable was given in [Matt. 21:43](#), where the Kingdom of God was to be taken from them and given to a nation who would render the fruits to God.

Ahab and Jezebel serve as prophetic types of the Kingdom's usurpers. Ahab was later killed in battle, and Jezebel was thrown out the window and was eaten by dogs, according to the prophecy in [2 Kings 9:10](#),

¹⁰ And the dogs shall eat Jezebel in the territory of Jezreel, and none shall bury her ...

In the book of Revelation, Jezebel is seen as the great harlot of Babylon ([Rev. 17:5](#)), the false bride, who is ultimately eaten by her own dogs (the "beasts" in [Rev. 17:16](#)).

Elijah on Mount Carmel

Another mountain a few miles northwest of Megiddo is Mount Carmel. It is where Elijah had his famous showdown with the prophets of Baal, whom Ahab supported through the influence of Jezebel. Josiah was the king of Judah, but Ahab was the king of Israel. Scripture thus gives us prophetic precedents from both Judah and Israel.

The false prophets were given the first opportunity to call down fire from heaven upon their altar on Mount Carmel ([1 Kings 18:20](#)). They prayed at the time of the morning sacrifice ([1 Kings 18:26](#)) without success. Then at the time of the evening sacrifice ([1 Kings 18:29](#)), Elijah "*repaired the altar of the Lord which had been torn down*" ([1 Kings 18:30](#)). His prayer was successful, and the fire of God came down in the sight of all present as God accepted his sacrifice.

A small but significant detail in this story connects it to the gathering at Armageddon. Speaking of the false prophets and their prayers, [1 Kings 18:26](#) says,

²⁶ Then they took the ox which was given them and they prepared it and called on the name of Baal from morning until noon saying, “O Baal, answer us.” But there was no voice and no one answered. And they leaped [*pasach*] about the altar which they made.

The two daily sacrifices prophesied of the two comings of Christ. The first, that is, the morning sacrifice, was fulfilled at Passover (*Pesach*), while the second, the evening sacrifice, is yet to be fulfilled at Tabernacles. The false prophets “*leaped about the altar*,” and this has more than one layer of meaning. The word “leaped” is from the Hebrew word *pasach*, which means “to hop, leap, pass over”—or *Passover*. It shows that they were unable to receive the revelation of Passover.

Secondly, it shows the action of a frog. The Hebrew word for “frog” is *tsefardeah*, which means “to dance, to leap.”

In other words, the false prophets of Baal, who leaped over the altar in their frenzied dance, were acting like frogs, and this prophetically connects them to the three frogs, or “unclean spirits,” in [Rev. 16:13](#). Just as their false teachings had led the prophets of Baal to their doom on Mount Carmel, so also do the false teachings lead the people to the nearby plain of Armageddon in [Rev. 16:13–16](#).

When the prophets of Baal leaped and danced for three hours without success, Elijah mocked them, saying in [1 Kings 18:27](#), “*Call out with a loud voice, for he is a god; either he is occupied or gone aside [i.e., to the toilet], or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and needs to be awakened.*”

They were probably somewhat fearful by this time, but they renewed their religious froggie dance and added a new feature:

²⁸ So they cried with a loud voice and cut themselves [*gadad*] according to their custom with swords and lances until the blood gushed out on them.

Recall that Megiddo comes from the root word *gadad*, which has a double meaning: “to cut oneself” and “to gather together.” Hence, hidden in the showdown is not only the three frogs, but also the root word for Megiddo. The prophets of Baal not only did a froggie dance (*tsefardeah*), but they also cut themselves (*gadad*). Of course, Elijah had also called this gathering, a rendezvous at the mountain ([1 Kings 18:19, 20](#)).

By combining these layers of meaning, we see that the rejection of Christ at Passover, along with usurping the fruits of the Kingdom, were the result of spiritual “frogs” coming out of the mouths of the rabbis, priests, and false teachers. This occurred at the first coming of Christ, prophesied in the morning sacrifice.

The result was that they induced men to gather (or rendezvous) at Armageddon for destruction at “*the great day of God Almighty*” ([Rev. 13:14](#)) in conjunction with the second coming of Christ—pictured by the evening sacrifice. The showdown of Elijah, then, contained elements of both comings of Christ, but the story ends with the destruction of the prophets of Baal near Meggido, or Har-mageddon.

This “*great day of God Almighty*” is the fall of Mystery Babylon, prophesied in so many ways throughout Scripture. This leads us to the seventh bowl of wine poured out as a final word of judgment upon that great city.

Chapter 11: The Approaching Fulness of God Angel

[Revelation 16:17](#) says,

¹⁷ And the seventh angel poured out his bowl upon the air; and a loud voice came out of the temple from the throne, saying, “It is done.”

In my personal revelation, the seventh angel is the Angel of the Approaching Fulness of God. When this was revealed many years ago, I wondered about it. One might think that the angel’s name would be something like Overthrowing the Wicked, or perhaps Casting Down Falsehood. But instead, the focus is upon the positive side, which is inherent in the bowl of water.

The goal is to establish the Kingdom and to fill us with the fulness of the Spirit. Divine judgment upon Babylon is only necessary to remove the obstacle (the usurpers and their systems of government), so that the Kingdom and its rulers can take their rightful places.

Whereas the sixth angel was called to prepare and “*to gather them together for the war of the great day of God*” ([Rev. 16:14](#)), the seventh angel brings this war to a successful conclusion. When the loud voice says, “*It is done*,” it is apparent that this is said from the divine perspective, for pouring out the bowls is really only the beginning. The decree must yet be enforced and carried out in the world. Hence, “*it is done*” establishes the fact and asserts that there is no possibility that His word will fall to the ground. It will happen, and so He reveals the end from the beginning.

The Seventy Year Babylonian Pattern

The bowl of wine is directed at “*Babylon the great*” ([Rev. 16:19](#)), and further details are then given in chapters 17–19. The question is what was John’s understanding of the identity of Babylon? Did he see it as the old physical city in Iraq, as some believe? There is no evidence of this, although many of the prophecies of Babylon’s fall, given by the prophets, were spoken in terms of the old city.

Babylon is much larger today than it was back then, for it is now a world-wide system of government, which men have called “The New World Order.” They mean the New Order that was established after World War II, including the United Nations, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the US dollar as the world currency, etc. This Order is now coming apart after 70 years, even as the old Babylon only lasted 70 years before being overthrown.

The Bretton Woods Convention was held in 1944, and the UN was finally set up in 1945. Perhaps the climax of this time occurred with UN’s vote to partition Palestine and to create a Jewish Homeland on Nov. 29, 1947. The actual State of Israel was established on May 14, 1948. We may look at events 70 years later from 2014–2018 as endpoints in the fall of the (now old) New World Order.

What is coming in our time is something different that is prophetically linked to the Medes and Persians in the Old Testament pattern, but which John calls “*the kings from the east*” in [Rev. 16:12](#). John’s nonspecific terminology suggests that the calling to overthrow Babylon is no longer specifically the old nations of Media and Persia. Though the patterns were set long ago, there are now new players on the world stage, and the fall of Babylon this time is much larger than just the old city.

Most important is the fact that we have now completed the time of divine judgment, and therefore, the beast systems are now about to be replaced by the Kingdom of God. When Babylon fell in the time of Daniel, Cyrus and Darius formed the coalition of the second beast, described as the “*arms of silver*” ([Dan. 2:32](#)). Later, in [Dan. 7:5](#) they are pictured as a “bear” with one arm stronger than the other.

Even though Cyrus was a type of Christ ([Isaiah 45:1](#)), and though he issued the decree to build the cities of Judah and to allow immigrants to inhabit Jerusalem ([Isaiah 44:26](#)), he could not establish the Kingdom. He was, after all, the

ruler of the second beast nation, and this was his dominant calling at that time. As long as the beast systems ruled, Medo-Persia's role as the second beast nation was fixed. The Cyrus calling as Messiah was subordinate to his calling as king of a beast. The messianic prophecy could not become the dominant feature until the last beast had run his full course.

It remains for our time to fulfill these messianic prophecies given to Cyrus and Darius—that is, *the kings from the east*. Because the time of beast dominion has now ended, these “kings” are now able to fulfill their *real* calling—overthrowing modern Babylon, funding the Kingdom of God, and preparing for the coming of the Messiah and the manifestation of the Sons of God.

As I have written elsewhere, the “seven times” of divine judgment are completed within the framework of 2014–2017 (extending into the middle of 2018). Dating from 607–604 B.C., the seven times might have ended in 1914–1917, had it not been for the century from 163–63 B.C. when Judah was independent from the third beast (Grecian beast). Having been deprived of this century in their “seven times” contract, this time had to be added to 1914–1917, and this is why the contract with the beast systems was extended until 2014–2017.

It is remarkable, too, that the New World Order was set up after World War II from 1944–1947 and into 1948, and that the seventy-year pattern ends at the same time that the extra hundred years in the *seven times* contract also ends—from 2014–2018.

Babylon, Egypt, and Jerusalem

The “seven times” of judgment began with the fall of Jerusalem in 604 B.C. In 1917 General Allenby took Jerusalem from the Ottoman Empire. This suggests another “Jerusalem” event in 2017–2018, which is also seventy years since the Palestinian Resolution in 1947 and the establishment of the Israeli state in 1948.

But what does Jerusalem have to do with prophecies about the fall of Babylon? Recall that John told us about the two witnesses in [Rev. 11:8](#),

⁸ And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which mystically [spiritually] is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified [i.e., Jerusalem].

In [Rev. 11:6](#) the two witnesses are said to bring plagues upon this spiritual city, and we also see that the seven bowls of wine in Revelation 16 are called “*the seven plagues of the seven angels*” ([Rev. 15:8](#)). The general prophecy of the two witnesses against the city include the specific plagues of the seven angels upon Babylon. Hence, the “city” is not a single city any more, and yet it is a spiritual extension of Babylon, Sodom, Egypt, and (earthly) Jerusalem.

This is incomprehensible to those who think that the earthly Jerusalem has been given the promise of God to be the capital of the Kingdom, a place where another temple of stone and wood will be built, from which place Jesus will rule the world in the age to come. That school of prophecy does not properly distinguish between the earthly and the heavenly Jerusalem. If they would but read Paul's explanation in [Gal. 4:22–26](#), they would understand that the earthly Jerusalem is Hagar, not Sarah, and that it is the embodiment of the Old Covenant, which can never establish the Kingdom of Christ, for it is “*in slavery with her children*” ([Gal. 4:25](#)).

This “slavery” is pictured in its identification with “Egypt” and “Babylon,” both of which enslaved Israel or Judah. Therefore, it is clear that when Scripture prophesies of the fall of Babylon, this “city” includes the earthly Jerusalem, for even though Jerusalem is an earthly city, it is also a spiritual—but carnal—city of the Old Covenant. Just because it is *spiritual* does not mean it is *heavenly*. The earthly Jerusalem is no more heavenly than spiritual Egypt or spiritual Sodom in [Rev. 11:8](#).

In the end, it is a “tale of two cities.” In ancient times the two cities competing for dominion were Babylon (built by Nimrod) and Jerusalem (built by Shem under the title of Melchizedek, “King of Righteousness”). In our time the old cities have now become spiritual cities opposing each other: Mystery Babylon vs. Heavenly Jerusalem. Another way

to view this—if we follow a different prophetic model—is to monitor the conflict between the earthly Jerusalem and the heavenly Jerusalem.

Old and New Covenant Mandates

In both cases, God gave Babylon and Jerusalem a temporary mandate to rule. Jerusalem, says Paul, “*is Mount Sinai in Arabia*” ([Gal. 4:25](#)), because the Old Covenant was established in Arabia, the inheritance of Ishmael, son of Hagar. For 1480 years the Old Covenant had divine approval, even though it was a foregone conclusion that it would not succeed in establishing the Kingdom.

It was only when the Mediator of the New Covenant arrived, and when the people rejected Him and opted to remain under the jurisdiction of Moses and Mount Sinai, that the Old Covenant exceeded its divine mandate. This was also the point where the chief priests inadvertently put Jerusalem under the authority of Ishmael, whose inheritance is Mount Sinai in Arabia, the place of the Old Covenant.

To put it plainly, when the chief priests rejected the Mediator of the New Covenant in favor of Moses and the Old Covenant (“Sinai”), they put Jerusalem and the land of Judah under the lawful jurisdiction of Ishmael. They would dispute this, of course, but no one can dispute the results. God allowed the Muslims to come from Arabia and take Jerusalem six centuries later. By adhering to the Old Covenant, they came under the legal jurisdiction of Ishmael, and as children of the earthly Jerusalem (Hagar), they became spiritual Ishmaelites, citizens of Mount Sinai in Arabia.

Paul tells us that the children of Hagar and Sarah (i.e., earthly and heavenly Jerusalems) were in conflict, as each claimed the promises of God. Paul says in [Gal. 4:28, 29](#),

²⁸ And you, brethren, like Isaac are children of promise. ²⁹ But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now also.

The Old Covenant is based on the promises (vows) of men in [Exodus 19:8](#). The New Covenant is based on the promise of God ([Deut. 29:12–14](#)). To be part of the Isaac company is to be one of the “*children of promise*.” One cannot be of “Isaac” by claiming the earthly Jerusalem as one’s mother, for it is a self-contradiction to claim that Hagar is the mother of Isaac. Neither can one claim the promise of God (New Covenant) by adhering to the promises of men (Old Covenant).

In the end of the age in which we live, this “Jerusalem” conflict will be resolved. The outcome of the divine resolution is prophesied, as Paul tells us in [Gal. 4:30](#): “*Cast out the bondwoman and her son.*” The sons of the earthly Jerusalem will not be heirs with the sons of the free woman. Only children of “Sarah” can be inheritors.

If any son of the earthly Jerusalem wants to be “chosen” as an heir, he must claim a new mother, put his faith in the Mediator of the New Covenant, and cast out the bondwoman (earthly Jerusalem). Paul knew what he was talking about, for he had already done this on the Damascus road. His conversion is an example or pattern (*hupotyposis*) for all true conversions ([1 Tim. 1:16](#)).

The conflict between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Babylon cannot be separated from the conflict between the two Jerusalems. As I have written elsewhere, the Hebrew name for the city is *Ierushalayim*, which literally means “two Jerusalems.” The earthly city was given the first opportunity to succeed by the power of the Old Covenant. It failed, and the prophet then called it “the bloody city” ([Ezekiel 22:2; 24:6, 9](#)). The glory departed from it even as the glory had departed from Shiloh some centuries earlier ([Jer. 7:14; Ezekiel 9:3; 11:23](#)).

The failure of the earthly Jerusalem to bring peace to the earth did not cause God’s promise to fail. In fact, it established God’s promise, for only in the failure of the earthly Jerusalem and its Old Covenant could the heavenly Jerusalem and the New Covenant fulfill those promises.

So when the Angel of the Approaching Fulness of God poured out his bowl of wine upon Babylon, it also overthrew the Old Jerusalem, which is simply another form of slavery. The intent of God is to overthrow all forms of slavery and to move toward the day when all men manifest the full presence of God.

Chapter 12: Jerusalem and Babylon

Most prophecy teachers understand that the battle of Armageddon is to be fought over control of the city of Jerusalem. They connect this battle with Jesus' end-time prophecies in Matthew 24 and Luke 21 about tribulation and war in Jesus' warnings to the people of Jerusalem. [Luke 21:20–22](#) is the most specific statement in this regard:

²⁰ But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is at hand. ²¹ Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are in the midst of the city depart, and let not those who are in the country enter the city; ²² because these are days of vengeance, in order that all things that are written may be fulfilled.

Jesus wept over the city, knowing that it would be destroyed. [Luke 19:41](#) says,

⁴¹ And when He approached, He saw the city and wept over it, ⁴² saying, “If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes.

Jerusalem means “City of Peace.” Its name reflects its calling to bring peace to the world through the Prince of Peace. Even Solomon was a type of Christ in this regard, for his name means Peaceful. However, the earthly Jerusalem failed to bring peace, for its people and leaders did not know “*the things which make for peace.*” It then became “the bloody city,” and became “*a curse to all the nations of the earth*” ([Jer. 26:6](#)). See also [Isaiah 65:15](#); [Jer. 24:9](#); [25:18](#); [44:8](#), [12](#), and [22](#).

In [Luke 19:43](#), [44](#) Jesus continues His prophecy about Jerusalem,

⁴³ For the days shall come upon you when your enemies will throw up a bank before you, and surround you, and hem you in on every side, ⁴⁴ and will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation.

The church in Jerusalem remembered Jesus' words when they saw the approaching danger as the Roman army began to subdue the Jewish Revolt (66–73 A.D.). The church left Jerusalem at that time, moving to Pella on the other side of the Jordan River. Bishop Eusebius tells us this in his *Ecclesiastical History* III, 5,

“Furthermore, the members of the Jerusalem church, by means of an oracle given by revelation to acceptable persons there, were ordered to leave the City before the war began and settle in a town in Perea called Pella. To Pella those who believed in Christ migrated from Jerusalem.”

Jesus' prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem, after being surrounded by armies, was strikingly fulfilled when Rome began its siege on Passover morning of 70 A.D. This was the 40th anniversary of John's execution at the hands of King Herod. The city and the temple were destroyed a few months later in the same year. But this was neither the first nor the last destruction of Jerusalem.

Jeremiah's Prophecy

Jeremiah prophesied of Jerusalem's destruction 600 years earlier by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. In Jeremiah 19 he was led by the Spirit to compare the city to an old clay jar which, once smashed, could never be remade into a new vessel ([Jer. 19:10](#), [11](#)). It seems that very few prophecy teachers today take Jeremiah seriously or even know what he said.

They are confused by the earlier prophecy in [Jer. 18:1–10](#), where we read of another clay jar that was “*spoiled in the hand of the potter, so he remade it into another vessel*” ([Jer. 18:4](#)). This prophecy, however, was not about Judah and Jerusalem, but about the house of Israel. Judah and Israel were two distinct nations during the time of the Divided

Kingdom. Jeremiah pictured each nation by a different jar, one of wet clay that could be remade, the other of hardened clay that could not be repaired once it was broken.

The wet clay was Israel ([Jer. 18:6](#)). The hardened clay was Jerusalem and the kings of Judah ([Jer. 19:3](#)). The misunderstanding comes when men think that the Jews are Israel, when in fact the English word “Jew” is short for *Judah*. The Israelites were taken to Assyria and became the so-called “lost tribes of Israel.” The Jews were taken to Babylon, but they were never lost, because they returned seventy years later to the old land.

The prophets never confuse Judah with Israel in their prophecies, for each had a different destiny to fulfill in the divine plan. In this case, the prophet gives great hope for Israel, but gives not one word of hope for Jerusalem.

So when Jeremiah tells us that Jerusalem was to be broken “*even as one breaks a potter’s vessel which cannot again be repaired*” ([Jer. 19:11](#)), we know this applies to the Jews specifically living in Jerusalem or perhaps those under the authority of the Old Covenant. The old earthen jar did not refer to Israel, which had been scattered abroad by the Assyrians, for the House of Israel was to be remade into another vessel.

Such a prophecy is incomprehensible if one thinks that the Jews are Israel. When the Jews named their state Israel in 1948, those who were ignorant of the difference between Israel and Judah were deceived into thinking that this fulfilled the prophecies of the wet clay being remade into another vessel in [Jeremiah 18:1–10](#). This solidified the confusion in the minds of Christians who were unfamiliar with biblical history.

The fact is that the state of Israel is not the remade clay vessel in [Jer. 18:4](#). It does not matter what they named their nation. All that matters is what God said would happen to it. The Zionist state is instead fulfilling the prophecy of the hardened jar in [Jer. 19:11](#). The destruction of Jerusalem in the time of Nebuchadnezzar partially fulfilled the prophecy. If the city had never been rebuilt, then and only then could it be said that the prophecy was completed. However, the city was rebuilt by Nehemiah. Therefore, more remained to be fulfilled.

The city and temple existed in Jesus’ time, but Jesus spoke of its destruction. Hence, the city was again destroyed in 70 A.D., and perhaps many in that time thought this was the final end of Jerusalem. But it was later rebuilt and exists even today. Therefore, unless we are willing to admit that Jeremiah was a false prophet, we can only conclude that Jerusalem—the state and its government, which they now call *Israel*—will again be destroyed. But this time the destruction will be so complete that it will never again be rebuilt.

I believe that this final destruction of the earthly Jerusalem is necessary in order to break the blindness upon the church that has made them see Hagar-Jerusalem as their spiritual mother. The bondwoman must be cast out in order that Sarah and her son can inherit the earth. As long as Hagar and her son continues to challenge Sarah and her son for the right to rule as the chosen ones, there will be an ongoing dispute in the divine court. Until this is resolved in the divine court, the Isaac company cannot lay claim to the Kingdom, nor can Sarah—the heavenly Jerusalem—be established as the mother of the inheritors.

The final war called Armageddon cannot feasibly happen apart from the destruction of Jerusalem. The main confusion in the church today lies in their refusal to see that the earthly Jerusalem is Hagar and must be cast out. *Christian Zionists are the lawyers for Hagar and Ishmael in the divine court*, attempting to convince God to give their clients the Kingdom.

But God has already ruled against them. The problem is that they have refused to accept His ruling and have appealed the case for review, as if God might have made a mistake in His earlier ruling.

These are the evil figs of Jeremiah 24, who are called to bring about utter destruction upon the nation for refusing to comply with the ruling of the divine court. Theoretically, if they would repent and accept the Court’s ruling and submit to the calling and authority of Sarah and Isaac, they could become part of the Kingdom along with all others who place their faith in Jesus Christ, the King. But Jeremiah indicates that their hearts are like hardened clay that can only be broken.

Isaiah's Prophecy

[Isaiah 29:1–6](#) is another prophecy that relates directly to Armageddon. [Isaiah 29:1](#) begins,

¹ Woe, O Ariel, Ariel the city where David once camped! Add year to year, observe your feasts on schedule.

Ariel is a poetic name for Jerusalem, “*the city where David once camped.*” The name has a double meaning, which Isaiah uses in his prophecy. First, it means “lion of God,” taken from the Hebrew word *ariy*, or “lion.” Referring to David and his mighty men, it was figuratively a City of Lions, or Heroes.

Secondly, Ariel means “hearth (altar) of God,” from *arieyl*, which is a variant of the Hebrew word *har-el*, “mount of God.” (See Strong’s #741 and #2025). The word *har*, of course, is also in the word *Har-Megiddo* (i.e., “Armageddon”). This shows the link between [Isaiah 29:1](#) and [Rev. 16:16](#).

As we will see shortly, Jerusalem was supposed to be the lion of God, the place of heroes and victorious conquerors. Again, it was supposed to be the mount of God’s hearth, or altar, in the sense of being the place of sacrifice to God.

However, because Jerusalem, the “City of Peace,” refused to repent, it had become “*the bloody city*,” a city of violence, says Ezekiel. For this reason, the city itself was to become the sacrifice, a place of burning, even as a burnt offering was completely consumed.

[Isaiah 29:2](#), [3](#) continues,

² And I will bring distress to Ariel, and she shall be a city of lamenting and mourning; and she shall be like an Ariel [“hearth of God”] to me. ³ And I will camp against you encircling you, and I will set siegeworks against you, and I will raise up battle towers against you. ⁴ Then you shall be brought low ...

This is not a prophecy of blessing upon Ariel-Jerusalem. It is instead a time of “*lamenting and mourning*” as God camps *against* Jerusalem. Notice that in this siege of Jerusalem, God Himself claims credit for leading the siege. In other words, God is on the side of the attackers, or rather, the attackers are on God’s side as He turns the city into “*an Ariel*,” that is, a hearth, or an altar of sacrifice.

[Isaiah 29:5](#) then speaks of the enemies of the city—not the attackers, but those who occupy the city at the time of the siege. Speaking directly to Ariel, God says,

⁵ But the multitude of your [Ariel’s] enemies shall become like fine dust, and the multitude of the ruthless ones like the chaff which blows away; and it shall happen instantly, suddenly.

Here is where most people become confused, thinking that God was speaking against His own army that He was leading in the attack against Jerusalem. It is easy to make that assumption, if we do not know the legal definition of God’s enemies that is set forth in the laws of Tribulation in [Lev. 26:40–42](#). Moses said that if Israel became hostile to God and refused to honor their covenant with Him, then God would act with hostility toward Israel.

Isaiah himself confirms this later in [Isaiah 63:10](#), saying,

¹⁰ But they rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit; therefore, He turned Himself to become their enemy. He fought against them.

When Israel or Judah fights against God and remains hostile toward the One sent by God, then God becomes “their enemy” and fights against them! This is what is happening in [Isaiah 29:3](#). God and Jerusalem are hostile to one another and are pictured as “enemies.” God has raised up His armies to fight against Jerusalem, and He is the One leading the armies as they lay siege to Jerusalem that is inhabited by God’s enemies.

Jesus' Prophecies of the Siege

Isaiah's prophecy is explained further in Jesus' parable in [Matt. 22:7](#), where God lays siege to Jerusalem because the people rejected His invitation to His Son's wedding feast.

⁷ But the king was enraged and sent his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and set their city on fire.

The parable says nothing of murder, but we know that they had murdered the prophets already and would soon do the same to Jesus Himself. While this parable was primarily a prophecy about God's *Roman* army that was conscripted to destroy Jerusalem in 70 A.D., it sets forth the same scene from Isaiah 29 and in [Jer. 19:11](#), regarding the final destruction of Jerusalem.

Nuclear War?

[Isaiah 29:6](#) continues,

⁶ From the Lord of hosts you [Jerusalem] will be punished with thunder and earthquake and loud noise, with whirlwind and tempest and the flame of a consuming fire.

Most people—by assuming that the “enemies” are non-Jews attacking Jerusalem—teach that God will turn and destroy His own army during the siege. But that is ludicrous, in light of verse 4, where God tells Jerusalem, “*you shall be brought low... and your speech shall whisper from the dust.*”

This is not a scene where Jerusalem comes out victorious. It is a scene of destruction. Further, the description of this destruction probably indicates a nuclear war, with people becoming “*like fine dust*” and “*chaff which blows away.*” This happens “*instantly, suddenly*” (vs. 5) and “*with thunder and earthquake and loud noise, with whirlwind and tempest and the flame of a consuming fire*” (vs. 6).

What better way could a prophet from that time describe a nuclear explosion? And does this not also describe the scene in [Matt. 22:7](#), where God “*set their city on fire*”?

Like a Dream

Only after describing the city's destruction does God then turn His attention to His army that He raised up to lay siege to Jerusalem. [Isaiah 29:7](#) says,

⁷ And the multitude of all the nations who wage war against Ariel, even all who wage war against her and her stronghold, and who distress her, shall be like a dream, a vision of the night.

Take note that God had already stated in verse 2, “*I will bring distress to Ariel.*” In verse 3 God says, “*I will camp against you.*” So it is understood that the nations waging war against Ariel are being led by God Himself. Hence, He does not destroy these “*nations who wage war against Ariel.*” But neither does He reward them.

Strangely enough, His words seem almost anticlimactic. It will only be “*like a dream.*” In what way? [Isaiah 29:8](#) says,

⁸ And it will be as when a hungry man dreams—and behold, he is eating; but when he awakens, his hunger is not satisfied, or as when a thirsty man dreams—and behold, he is drinking, but when he awakens, behold, he is faint, and his thirst is not quenched. Thus the multitude of all the nations shall be, who wage war against Mount Zion.

In other words, these armies whom God has raised up to “*wage war against Ariel*” have been motivated by “hunger” and “thirst” in some way. Insofar as the Muslim nations are concerned, they are hungry to obtain the land for

themselves and to push the Israelis into the sea. But their “dream” will not be fulfilled, for when they awake, they will still be hungry and thirsty.

Because of the utter destruction—which I believe is nuclear—*no one will get the land*. There will be too much radiation from the fallout for anyone to live there. In that way, [Jer. 19:11](#) will be fulfilled. When the city is destroyed as an old earthen vessel that cannot be repaired, and when the land becomes “like Tophet,” which means “burning” ([Jer. 19:12](#)), it will not be habitable for *anyone*.

And so, the armies that God raises up in His siege of Jerusalem are motivated by the desire to own and inhabit the land. This is their “dream.” But when they awake, they will still be hungry and thirsty. If they had known that Jerusalem is Hagar, and that Hagar cannot be the mother of the Kingdom, they might have understood that the earthly Jerusalem must be cast out in favor of the heavenly Jerusalem, which is the true City of Peace.

This destruction of Jerusalem, I believe, will coincide with the overthrow of Babylon, because the citizens, sons, and supporters of the earthly Jerusalem—being carnal, rebellious, and hostile to Jesus Christ—“*shall not be an heir with the son of the free woman*” ([Gal. 4:30](#)). When Jerusalem is destroyed, then everyone will have no choice but to accept the divine verdict.

The fate of Jerusalem is bound up in the fate of Babylon.

Chapter 13: Shaking All Nations Impartially

In 1948 the beast-controlled nations of the world, united under the name “United Nations,” created the state known as *Israel*. The debate began on November 21, 1947, and the vote occurred eight days later on November 29.

Our Jubilee Prayer Campaign was held 46 years later during those same eight days in 1993. At the time we recognized the close association between “Israel” and “Babylon,” because our divine court case was designed to overthrow the rulers of both. Both Jerusalem and Babylon were contending for world rulership, and so we were led to petition the court to give the Kingdom to the overcoming “saints,” to whom the authority was actually promised ([Dan. 7:22, 27](#); [1 Cor. 6:2](#)).

46 Years from 1947–1993

The number 46 is significant, especially in Jesus’ prophecy of the temple in [John 2:19–21](#),

¹⁹ Jesus therefore said to them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” ²⁰ The Jews therefore said, “It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?” ²¹ But He was speaking of the temple of His body.

In 1993 we understood that the Jews had been given 46 years to build their “temple” (that is, their Zionist state) from 1947–1993. The numeric value of the Hebrew name *Levi* is 46. Furthermore, *naos*, the Greek word for “temple,” is used in the New Testament precisely 46 times. Hence, we knew by revelation that their time to build was finished in 1993, and that three years later, in 1996, God would raise up “*the temple of His body*” to declare the Jubilee.

We were obedient to the revelation, and we won our case before the divine court. Proof of this was seen one year after the prayer campaign on Nov. 29, 1994, when the Babylonian “tree” was defoliated and cut down, as seen in the defeat of House Speaker Tom Foley, who was beaten by Tom Nethercutt (“lower cut”). Foley then resigned on Nov. 29, 1994 after the GATT treaty was passed.

We already wrote about this in chapter 7, and a more complete account can be found in [The Wars of the Lord, chapter 12](#).

The Jubilee Prayer Campaign in 1993 filed a complaint against Babylon and the final beast system, and this also included any and all rivals who laid claim to the Dominion Mandate. The Jewish claim is well known, especially in Christian circles, for a great many Christians have petitioned the divine court to give the Dominion Mandate to the Jews. They believe that all Jews are chosen by virtue of their race, or descent from Abraham, when in fact Paul says that only the remnant of grace is actually chosen or “*elected*” ([Rom. 11:6](#)). The rest are “*blinded*” (KJV) or “*hardened*” (NASB).

No one is “chosen” apart from Jesus Christ—and, in fact, one must go beyond simple faith to become an overcomer. Faith in Christ (the Lamb of God) allows a person to experience Passover, but to be an overcomer one must experience Pentecost and Tabernacles as well.

Contenders for the Throne

There is a strange idea held by many prophecy teachers that at the last minute Jesus will come and save the last 144,000 Jews from extinction, and that these few will be converted and will rule the world in the Age to come. Such Christians are largely ignorant of the feast days, for they assume that a Passover experience (i.e., getting saved) is all that is needed to qualify a person to reign with Christ in the Kingdom.

If 144,000 Jews are saved at the last minute, I would rejoice, but unless they also experience Pentecost and have the law written on their hearts, and unless they suddenly mature through a Tabernacles experience with God, *they are still unqualified to rule the Kingdom.*

Becoming an overcomer takes time, and furthermore, that path is not limited to Jews only. All have equal opportunity in this regard, because in Deuteronomy 16 God commands *both Israelites and aliens* to keep all three feasts. Passover is justification, Pentecost is sanctification, and Tabernacles is glorification. Hence, it is not *the Jews*, but “*the saints*” who will rule the world ([1 Cor. 6:2](#)).

So the prayer campaign in 1993 petitioned the heavenly Judge to give the Dominion Mandate of the Kingdom to the saints of the Most High. This necessarily meant that those currently holding this Mandate had had sufficient time to prove themselves to be unqualified to rule in the Kingdom. This certainly was the case with the beast nations, but it was also true in the case of the “Saul” church, whose time had also expired on Pentecost, May 30, 1993.

The beast nations were ruthless, but God had given them dominion ([Jer. 27:5](#), [6](#), [7](#)) as a matter of judgment for sin. Also, the church had been given a measure of dominion within the limitations of the beast system, according to the pattern of King Saul’s Pentecostal reign. These two contenders for world dominion enjoyed some legitimacy, even though they had abused their God-given positions as stewards of the Kingdom.

However, the third contender for world dominion (the Jewish leaders of Jerusalem) had *usurped* Christ’s throne by violence and force. They had followed the pattern of Absalom who usurped the throne of David a thousand years earlier. Hence, theirs was a special offense that made them more liable than either the beasts or the church.

Perhaps it was for this reason that the timing of the Jubilee Prayer Campaign was set according to the 46-year cycle from 1947. When we won our case (confirmed a year later in 1994), it became only a matter of time before Babylon would be taken intact by the kings from the east and before Jerusalem would be destroyed.

There are many prophetic stories in Scripture that shed light on the final overthrow of the beasts and the rise of the saints of the Most High. Jezebel is just one pattern, but it figures prominently in the book of Revelation. Jezebel is present in the church of Thyatira, representing the Roman church from 529–1517 A.D. But in the end, the great harlot, pretending to be the bride (but killing the prophets) is eaten by dogs (beasts). This is seen in [Rev. 17:16](#). It suggests that the United Nations, representing the beast systems today who created the state of “Israel” will turn on her and “*will eat her flesh and will burn her up with fire.*”

The reason for this, says John in [Rev. 17:17](#),

¹⁷ For God has put it in their hearts to execute His purpose by having a common purpose, and by giving their kingdom [Jezebel’s kingdom] to the beast, until the words of God should be fulfilled.

John then identifies this prophetic Jezebel in [Rev. 17:18](#),

¹⁸ And the woman whom you saw is the great city, which reigns over the kings of the earth.

This is not only Babylon, but Egypt, Sodom, and Jerusalem ([Rev. 11:8](#)). The earthly Jerusalem is Hagar, or Old Covenant religion and carnal methods of ruling the earth by violence and force. It is more than just the earthly city itself. It is an entire mindset that is found to some extent in every heart, but which is currently being burned out of the hearts of the overcomers by the fiery law of God as He writes His law upon their hearts. The spirit of the earthly Jerusalem rules all of the kingdoms of the world by force and violence.

Day 7: Psalm 82:5–8

When the seventh bowl of water and wine were poured out in the old temple on the seventh day of Tabernacles, the priests sang [Psalm 82:5–8](#).

⁵ **They do not know nor do they understand; they walk about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken ...**

This refers prophetically to the beast nations who rule in darkness and deceit. But when they are overthrown, “*the foundations of the earth are shaken.*” This shaking is described later in [Hag. 2:6, 7](#),

⁶ **For thus says the Lord of hosts, “Once more in a little while, I am going to shake the heavens and the earth, the sea also and the dry land.” ⁷ And I will shake all the nations; and they will come with the wealth of all nations; and I will fill this house with glory,”** says the Lord of hosts.

[Hebrews 12:26, 27, 28, 29](#) comments on this prophecy, saying,

²⁶ **And His voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying, “Yet once more I will shake not only the earth, but also the heaven.”** ²⁷ **And this expression, “Yet once more,” denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things, in order that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.** ²⁸ **Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude...** ²⁹ **For our God is a consuming fire.**

We see, then, that when the seventh bowl of wine is poured out upon Babylon, God begins to shake the earth, so that anything that is not an expression of God’s Kingdom will collapse. Conversely, because the bowl of *water* is poured out at the same time, the heavens are also to be shaken, so that the Spirit of God can be poured out to replace everything Babylonian with the things of the Kingdom.

[Psalm 82:6, 7](#) continues,

⁶ **I said, “You are gods [*elohim*], and all of you are sons of the Most High.”** ⁷ **Nevertheless you will die like men, and fall like any one of the princes.”**

The Hebrew word *elohim* has a variety of applications. It literally means a “subjector” (The Concordant Version), that is, one who is in authority over others. Most of the time this refers either to the Creator Himself or to false gods who lord it over those who follow their religions. But sometimes it also refers to the judges in Israel. [Exodus 21:6 KJV](#) says, “*his master shall bring him unto the judges,*” while the NASB renders it, “*his master shall bring him to God.*” The Hebrew text reads *Elohim*.

See also [Exodus 22:9](#), which says, “*the case of both parties shall come before the judges [*elohim*]; he whom the judges [*elohim*] condemn shall pay double to his neighbor.*” Here the NASB translates *elohim* as “the judges.”

In Psalm 82, the term *elohim* is used to describe the judges who are mentioned earlier in [Psalm 82:2](#),

² **How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked?**

The judges were supposed to represent God, the true *Elohim*, when they dispensed justice among the people. Hence, the judges were called and chosen by God as *elohim*, but because of their lawless judgments, they were to “*die like men.*” In other words, God vows to bring judgment upon the unjust judges. [Psalm 82:8](#) then concludes,

⁸ **Arise, O God [*Elohim*], judge the earth! For it is You who possesses [*nachal*] all the nations.**

All nations are owned by God by right of creation ([Jer. 27:5](#)). The word *nachal* also carries the sense of being given an inheritance to possess, and the word is translated “inheritance” many times. When this psalm was sung as a prophecy while pouring out the seventh bowls, it meant that Babylon was being shaken and would fall by divine judgment, so that God could take possession of all the nations.

No doubt many of the carnally-minded priests thought that this prophecy was directed against *other* nations. This viewpoint, however, only reflected their misunderstanding of the divine law, which demanded impartial judgment. In fact, [Psalm 82:2–4](#) brought up this point specifically, saying, “*How long will you judge unjustly, and show partiality to the wicked?*”

The implication is that God is an impartial judge, and so when Jerusalem itself became lawless, God did not give them a free pass as if being “chosen” meant that God would tolerate their sin. For this reason, when God judges Babylon, He will also judge Jerusalem. He is impartial in His judgments. The earthly Jerusalem does not live up to its name as the “City of Peace,” but is instead “the bloody city.”

Yet God knew the end from the beginning, and so He created two Jerusalems, one earthly and the other heavenly, in order that His promises to “Jerusalem” would not fail. This was not understood clearly until the apostles wrote of it in the New Testament. As we will see later in our study of Revelation 21, John applied many of Isaiah’s prophecies about “Jerusalem” to the *New* Jerusalem, rather than to the earthly city.

Chapter 14: The Seventh Bowls in 2006

On the first day of Tabernacles, October 7, 2006, about 35 people came to Babylon, New York as witnesses when I poured out the seventh bowls of water and wine. In fact, I was led to pour out water and wine at four different cemeteries in that area—two Catholic cemeteries, one Jewish, and one at the nearby Amityville cemetery. The city has been made famous by the movie, *The Amityville Horror*.

Amityville is sacred to the witches of Wicca, because it was where “the father of modern Wicca,” Ray Buckland, spread witchcraft throughout the world. Buckland and Melissa Joan Hart, the owner and producer of *Sabrina the Teenage Witch* television show, popularized witchcraft a few decades ago.

<http://www.truelegends.info/paranormal/sun.htm>

Obtaining Legal Cause Against Babylon

On June 4, 2005 the daughter of a friend here in Minnesota took her own life after being on prescription pills for depression. Her name was Ann. She had been a music teacher at Queens College, and her funeral was at her church—First Presbyterian of Babylon, New York. She then had a second funeral in Mankato, Minnesota, which my wife and I attended at her mother’s invitation.

We had already received our first witness two months earlier that we were to pour out the seventh vial at Babylon, NY. But at the funeral, when the officiating minister spoke of Babylon, NY, we knew that something important was being revealed here. I felt strongly enough about it to tell her mother that I believed her daughter represented all the believers over the centuries who have lived and died in Babylon without seeing the release. I also told her that I felt that her daughter’s death (in 2005) would somehow provide us with the legal cause against Babylon in 2006.

Six months after the funeral, in December of 2005, the Lord told us that the seventh vial was to be poured out as a witness of Babylon’s fall on the first day of Tabernacles, Oct. 7, 2006. This was a departure from the usual pattern of pouring out the vial on the last day of Tabernacles. We were then to hold our Tabernacles conference a week later at the end of Tabernacles (Oct. 13–15, 2006).

On May 20, 2006 the reason for this change became apparent, when I discovered that we would be pouring out the seventh vial upon Babylon in Babylon, NY precisely 490 days after Ann took her life in Babylon, NY. The 490-day time cycle is explained in [Matt. 18:22](#) as a time of forgiveness, after which time the King brings His servants into accountability for debt (18:23, 24).

Babylon had refused to release its captives. This was, in fact, the reason for the seven bowls of wine that were being poured out upon Babylon from 2000–2006. The final 490-day cycle leading up to the seventh bowl of wine showed us the lawful cause that God had against Babylon. Thus, at the end of the 490 days, on Oct. 7, 2006, “*Babylon the great was remembered before God*” ([Rev. 16:19](#)).

It is Done

When we poured out the last bowls of water and wine at the Amityville cemetery, we shouted “*It is done!*” In other words, we spoke the words of the seventh angel in [Rev. 16:17](#), the Angel of the Approaching Fulness of God. As the Scripture indicates, I threw the water into the air, rather than pouring it upon the ground. We knew then that the decrees against Babylon were finished, and the judgment was set. It would only be a matter of time before the entire Babylonian system would fall to the kings from the east.

The following week end, at the end of the feast of Tabernacles in 2006, we went to Reading, PA where we held our Tabernacles conference at the Abraham Lincoln Hotel. The theme of the conference was “*Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty.*”

It had been my normal practice to take one session at our Tabernacles conferences to explain the significance of each bowl of water and wine in order to give the people some sense of what God was about to do in the coming year.

In Reading, PA I told them that the divine judgment was now set, and that they ought to expect to see the beginning of Babylon's collapse within the coming year (that is, before October of 2007). I specifically warned them that this collapse would be seen in the financial markets, because Babylon was fueled by money in the financial system.

The Earthquake

[Revelation 16:18](#) says,

¹⁸ And there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder; and there was a great earthquake, such as there had not been since man came to be upon the earth, so great an earthquake was it, and so mighty.

This description is similar to what we find in [Rev. 8:5](#) when the seven trumpets announced the overthrow of the Roman Empire from 410–476 A.D. There too, the thunder, lightning, and earthquake was not literal, but represented *earth-shattering events*. The same terminology is used of the fall of Babylon. The quake that shattered the Roman Empire was a seismic shift in western history, but the one that is to shake Babylon is an even greater earthquake that will change the world.

It is a world-wide system that is being shaken, and the result—according to both Haggai and the book of Hebrews—is that when the shaking is complete, only the Kingdom of God will remain standing, because it is the only Kingdom made of “*those things which cannot be shaken*” ([Heb. 12:27](#)). While the metaphor is of a physical earthquake, it is clear that the prophets spoke of something huge that will shake the whole world.

The Financial Crisis

In July 2007 the subprime mortgage crisis hit the nation, although according to the movie, *The Big Short*, which came out some years later, the problem actually began to surface at the end of April 2007. Yet I took notice of this in July and then realized that this was the start of Babylon's collapse. Ultimately the subprime mortgage crisis of 2007 led to the banking crisis of September 2008, when Lehman Brothers, AIG, Fanny Mae, and Freddie Mac all collapsed and were then bailed out with taxpayer money.

It was clear to me that this financial crisis would not be resolved by the taxpayer's bailout. The bailout and other massive amounts of money that were thrown at the problem did not solve the underlying financial problem causing this collapse. Subsequent “quantitative easing,” a fancy phrase for printing more money to inject into the economy by deficit spending, pumped the stock market back to its previous highs, but did nothing to resolve the foundational problem.

So we knew that Babylon had been given a reprieve—time to repent—but prophecy indicated that Babylon would not repent. It was to be destroyed and replaced by a new financial system advocated by the kings from the east. Ultimately, even this new financial system will be replaced as the Kingdom of God spreads throughout the world.

The City Divided into Three Parts

[Revelation 16:19](#) continues,

¹⁹ And the great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And Babylon the great was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath.

It seems that God is following the principle of “divide and conquer.” Since Babylon has ruled over all nations, either directly or indirectly, it is clear that events would cause certain nations to revolt from Babylonian domination. We

were already given a strong hint of this in [Rev. 16:12](#), which mentions “*the kings from the east*.” These rebels against Babylon have emerged as China and Russia today, along with their increasing number of allies.

The third group in the division of Babylon may be those who try to remain outside of the financial war in order to survive. However, it is possible that this refers to the Kingdom nations that will emerge after the great outpouring of the Holy Spirit has occurred. Certainly, the Kingdom of God will soon become a major factor in all of this, but whether it is the third division or not is unclear. If so, then we would understand that God has begun to carve His Kingdom out from the great city of Babylon and to lay claim to territory that is rightfully His.

[Dan. 2:35](#) says that when the stone hits the image on its feet (at the end of the age), the stone will begin to grow until it fills the whole earth. Obviously, the “Stone” Kingdom will take over the assets of Babylon, though not all at once. Time must be allowed for the kings from the east to do their work and also to be converted and incorporated into the Kingdom of God. Scripture gives us no clear indication as to how long this will take.

[Revelation 16:20](#) says,

²⁰ And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.

Again, this is not literal. In a literal earthquake of great magnitude, one might expect to see whole islands disappear and even mountains to fall. But these represent nations of various sizes that will become “failed states” and cease to exist as national entities.

This has already happened after many great wars in the past. Small non-aligned nations, like “islands,” have been absorbed by larger, stronger nations. At other times, larger nations were broken up into smaller units, such as what happened with Yugoslavia, the Soviet Union, and Czechoslovakia.

Earlier, in the course of the sixth seal in [Rev. 6:14](#), we read,

¹⁴ And the sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

This was fulfilled in the latter days of the Roman Empire, when whole nations were “moved.” In other words, their borders shifted. The nations appeared to move on a map. So also will this occur in our time.

The main point of John’s terminology is to show that the fall of Babylon is comparable to the fall of Rome, only in a much greater way. Rome was a city and a large empire, but it did not cover the whole earth. Babylon is a worldwide empire, ruling the nations secretly and in a hidden way (hence, the “Mystery”).

The Hailstones

[Revelation 16:21](#) concludes by saying,

²¹ And huge hailstones, about one hundred pounds each [literally, “a talent”], came down from heaven upon men; and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, because its plague was extremely severe.

Hail was one of the ten plagues upon Egypt ([Exodus 9:23](#)). When Pharaoh begged Moses to cease this plague, he agreed to stop the plague, but yet he told Pharaoh in [Exodus 9:29, 30](#),

²⁹ And Moses said to him, “As soon as I go out of the city, I will spread out my hands to the Lord; the thunder will cease, and there will be hail no longer, that you may know that the earth is the Lord’s.³⁰ But as for you and your servants, I know that you do not yet fear the Lord God.

In other words, the purpose of this plague upon Egypt was to teach men that “*the earth is the Lord’s*” by right of creation. Pharaoh had usurped authority by going against the will of the King of Kings. But even when the hail ceased, they did not yet “*fear the Lord God.*” In other words, they were still not willing to comply with the will of God, nor to recognize His right of ownership.

In Joshua 10 we read of another great battle in which hailstones were seen as a divine weapon. This story is highly prophetic of the fall of Babylon, because this battle was fought against five kings of Canaan, including Adoni-zedek, king of Jerusalem ([Joshua 10:1, 5](#)). In this battle, “*the Lord threw large stones from heaven on them*” ([Joshua 10:11](#)), and “*there were more who died from the hailstones than those whom the sons of Israel killed with the sword.*”

Joshua then prayed, and “*the sun stood still, and the moon stopped*” ([Joshua 10:13](#)). Verse 14 says of this day,

¹⁴ And there was no day like that before it or after it, when the Lord listened to the voice of a man; for the Lord fought for Israel.

This day was very important, as it set a prophetic precedent for the end of the age, not only by the hail, but in the fact that the enemies of Israel were in control of Jerusalem. The king ruled by the title of Adoni-zedek, which means “Lord of Righteousness.” It is interchangeable with Melchizedek, “King of Righteousness,” the title by which Shem had ruled when he first built the city centuries earlier.

The Adoni-zedek of Joshua 10 represents a usurper, a carnal king pretending to be the high priest of the Melchizedek Order. He is an antichrist, a usurper of the city of Jerusalem. He represents the “enemies” of Ariel-Jerusalem in [Isaiah 29:5](#), which we have already explained.

The hailstones against Babylon are sent for the same purpose as in the battle against the five kings of the coalition forces uniting around Adoni-zedek. The main difference is that the hail on Babylon is not literal, for [Isaiah 28:16, 17](#) says,

¹⁶ Therefore thus says the Lord God, “Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone, a costly cornerstone for the foundation, firmly placed. He who believes in it will not be disturbed.” ¹⁷ And I will make justice the measuring line, and righteousness the level [or “plummet”]; then hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the secret place.”

Hail represents the Truth of the word of God, which exposes all that is “secret” or hidden. When it hits “Mystery Babylon,” the lies are exposed to the light of truth by the divine “hail.” This hail is the “measuring line” and the plummet, by which truth is measured. All of this is prophesied in the context of Christ, the Chief Cornerstone, being laid as the foundation of the New Temple in [Eph. 2:20](#) and in [1 Peter 2:5, 6](#).

So we see that the false Melchizedek Order will be replaced by the truth-speaking overcomers and believers in general, who are living stones and pillars in the true Temple being built upon the foundation of Jesus Christ.

The truth will prevail and will destroy the great city of Mystery Babylon. This truth is represented by the water that is poured out along with the wine. Truth is accompanied by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which prepares the way for the return of Christ.

In the end, the earth will recognize His right to rule. But meanwhile, they blaspheme God “*because of the plague of the hail.*” The carnal mind hates the truth and fights against it, because, as Jesus said, “*men loved the darkness rather than the light, for their deeds were evil*” ([John 3:19](#)).

This brings us to the end of Mystery Babylon and the rise of the Kingdom of God. The details of Babylon’s fall, with further revelatory details, come in the next three chapters of the book of Revelation.

Chapter 15: Transferring the Debt Note

After the revelation of the seven bowls of wine (and water) and their connection to the seven drink offerings at the feast of Tabernacles, we can be assured that Babylon will indeed fall. As for the timing of this, the only thing we can say for sure is that the city will fall some time after God's contract with the beasts runs out.

That contract was prophesied in the laws of tribulation in Leviticus 26 as "seven times," which Daniel interprets as a distinct time period, and which John interprets as a series of 360-year cycles. As I have written earlier, seven times is 2,520 years, and the beasts then had actual rulership from 607–604 B.C. until 2014–2017. This date takes into account the century when Jerusalem was independent and free of beast rule from 163–63 B.C.

We were led to pour out the seven bowls of water and wine from October 2000 until October 2006, the final bowl being thrown into the air at Babylon, NY, with the pronouncement, "*It is done.*" We knew then that we would begin to see an economic collapse within the following year, and this is indeed what happened. The subprime mortgage crisis of mid-2007 was followed by the more serious banking crisis of September 2008.

Though many claimed that the crisis was over within a few months, we understood that the underlying "derivatives" problem was never solved. In fact, this gambling problem only increased, leaving the world economy more vulnerable than ever. Yet with the massive amounts of money being pumped into the banks through bailouts and "quantitative easing," the problem was masked by the manipulated rise of the stock market to record heights.

As it turned out, the crisis in 2008 was only a harbinger of a greater collapse yet to come. It served as a wakeup call to stop or limit the derivatives, but this warning went unheeded. The world now stands poised for a final collapse of Babylon.

Two Biblical Patterns

There are two biblical patterns that appear to be contradictory patterns for the fall of Babylon. The first is the actual fall of Babylon itself, when *the city fell intact*. Few were killed, as the Persian troops took the city after its divine mandate had run a full 70 years (607–537 B.C.). [Dan. 5:30](#) tells us that "*that same night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was slain.*" He is the only casualty recorded in Scripture.

The other pattern is that of Israel coming out of bondage from Egypt. This pattern is important, because the prophets liken Israel's future deliverance to the time when they came out of Egypt ([Isaiah 10:26](#); [11:16](#)). How far we should take this pattern is uncertain, but we know that God hardened Pharaoh's heart in order to inflict ten plagues upon Egypt. The seven bowls of wine are called *plagues* in [Rev. 15:8](#), partly to connect these with what happened to Egypt.

So the question remains, will the collapse of Babylon be relatively non-violent (as with the fall of Babylon), or will it be destructive (as with the fall of Egypt)? Perhaps the answer lies in observing how long the hearts of the Babylonian leaders remained hardened. As of October 2016, it has been ten years since the seventh bowls were poured out in Babylon, NY. Does this suggest a time of ten plagues, during which time men's hearts were hardened? We can only "*watch and pray,*" as Jesus counseled us in [Mark 13:33 \(KJV\)](#).

We can say with some certainty that Babylon's collapse could not have occurred prior to October 2014 when the seven times contract began to expire. Furthermore, the city had to be given a year in which to redeem itself, according to the law of redemption ([Lev. 25:29–31](#)). This gave Babylon until October 2015 in which to pay the debt that it owed. Yet this time also extends at least to the end of October 2017.

The Debt Note

One of the little-known themes of Scripture is that of the debt note. All sin is reckoned as a debt. That is why "*forgive us our sins*" in [Luke 11:4](#) is the equivalent of "*forgive us our debts*" in [Matt. 6:12](#). When a man sinned against his

neighbor, he became indebted to him and was thus “*under the law*” until full restitution was paid. When restitution was paid, and the law had no further interest in his case, he was said to be “*under grace*.”

If a thief stole from his neighbor, he was normally required to pay double restitution ([Exodus 22:4](#)). If he did not have sufficient assets to pay, then he was to be “*sold for his theft*” ([Exodus 22:3](#)). The court would then find a buyer who could *redeem* (take full responsibility for the debt of) the thief. The buyer would also take upon himself the responsibility to pay the debt, and in return he would be given a slave for a specified period of time. The judge was responsible to determine the sinner’s time of slavery according to the value of his labor and the amount of debt that he had incurred.

By the time his slave was set free, the full debt had to be paid. If not, the owner of the slave would be held liable for the debt. After all, he had enjoyed the services of his slave and should easily have made enough money to pay off the debt.

In the big prophetic picture, Israel sinned against God by violating the covenant by which they had agreed to be obedient to God’s voice ([Exodus 19:8](#)). God then “*sold them*” into the hands of the king of Mesopotamia for eight years ([Judges 3:8](#)). The Mesopotamian king, then, became Israel’s redeemer, taking upon himself the responsibility to pay the debt note of Israel within a period of eight years. Of course, this pagan king knew nothing of the divine law and certainly had no intention of paying Israel’s debt note, but he—not Israel—was held liable for the debt. This was God’s mercy upon Israel.

Stewards of the Vineyard

What was that debt note? In biblical terms, it was the fruits of the Kingdom. By the hand of Joshua, God planted a vineyard in the land of Canaan ([Isaiah 5:1, 7](#)). He put His vineyard into the hands of stewards (Israelites), contracting them (by covenant) to bring forth the fruits of the Kingdom. But when the time came to receive its fruit, the stewards could not produce any fruit that was worth eating ([Isaiah 5:2](#)).

Jesus told a parable in [Matt. 21:33–43](#) that was based on Isaiah’s revelation, though modified somewhat. In that story the stewards killed the prophets and finally the Son Himself in order to *usurp* the fruits of the vineyard for themselves. Jesus’ verdict is given in [Matt. 21:43](#),

⁴³ Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and be given to a nation producing the fruit of it.

God has always been a farmer, or “husbandman” ([John 15:1](#); [James 5:7](#)), who has intended to bring forth the fruit of the Spirit in the earth. The debt, then, is not paid until someone is able to take the debt note and pay it. Jesus came to do this very thing, and He is raising up a body of overcomers who are like Him. This is the body of the New Creation Man that alone can do the work of redeeming the earth—that is, bringing forth the fruit of the Spirit.

The Laws of Captivity and Tribulation

While in the land of Canaan, Israel sinned continually, and God often “sold” them into the hands of foreign nations as the law prescribed ([Judges 3:8](#); [4:2](#); [10:7](#)). Each time, those nations became legally responsible to bring forth the fruit of the Spirit, although this was impossible, because those nations were no more capable of doing this than Israel was. Hence, at the end of each captivity, those nations came under divine judgment.

In the end, Israel and Judah were sold into the hands of a succession of beast empires for a period of seven times, which finally began to end in 2014. This extremely long time of slavery tells us that the sin of Israel had accumulated to a very large debt. Those beast nations were only too happy to receive slaves, but now at the end of the age they are being held accountable for the unpaid debt note.

From 2014–2015 they received the mandatory year of grace in which to bring forth the fruit of the Spirit and establish the Kingdom under Jesus Christ. They failed to do this. After 2015, then, these beast nations face divine judgment.

Those who do not know the laws of restitution, debt, and slavery see only death and destruction in the judgment of God. Yet the fact is that God is raising up overcomers who, when perfected, will be able to redeem the debt note from Babylon and pay it by bringing forth the fruits of the Kingdom. This is the “*nation producing the fruit of it*” ([Matt. 21:43](#)). These are the stewards of the vineyard who will render to the Son the fruits which the previous stewards had refused to give Him ([Matt. 21:38, 39](#)).

The only hint of timing for this transfer is found in the next verse ([Matt. 21:44](#)),

⁴⁴ And he who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust.

This is a reference to the “stone” that strikes the Babylonian image on its feet and grinds the entire image to dust or “chaff” ([Dan. 2:35](#)). In other words, the “nation” of overcomers are given the Kingdom when the seven times have expired and divine judgment comes upon Babylon. We are living in those momentous times today. I believe that the transfer of authority, decreed by the divine court, occurred on the eighth day of Tabernacles, October 16, 2014. Babylon’s year of grace ended at Tabernacles of 2015, and now we await the judgment and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit which will change world history.

Of course, we cannot lose sight of the fact that God has raised up the kings from the east to judge Babylon. The overcomers do not have that calling, for even Daniel did nothing to overthrow Babylon. We must allow God’s executioners to do their job, while all aspiring overcomers ought to concentrate on doing their job of building the Kingdom and bringing forth its fruit.

Chapter 16: The Next World Order

The year 2016 is unique, because it is 70 years since the Bretton Woods Agreement was ratified and implemented (March 8–18, 1946). The Agreement was drawn up from July 1–22, 1944, toward the end of World War II, but it took time for the nations to ratify it, so it did not go into effect until 1946. This Agreement, based on the US dollar and the gold standard, became a major sign of modern economic Babylon, by which the US dollar has ruled the world for 70 years.

In fact, this is what set up what is called “The New World Order.” It is no longer “new,” and is, in fact, being replaced by the *Next* World Order, a transitional system brought to you by the kings from the east.

These 70 years began from 1944–1946 and are now ending from 2014–2016. The end of this 70-year cycle also coincides with the end of the “seven times” of divine judgment, when God took the Dominion Mandate from the king of Judah and gave it to Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon.

Overthrowing the US Dollar

There has been dissatisfaction for many years among the nations over the huge advantage that the US economy enjoyed on account of its world reserve currency status. The Vietnam war in the late 1960’s and early 1970’s brought great deficits in the US budget, resulting in overprinting US dollars, relative to its gold holdings.

This made many nations nervous. In 1971 France sent a warship to the New York harbor to collect \$190 million worth of gold, rather than to accumulate more US dollars. President Nixon then closed the door on gold redemptions on August 15, 1971, so that the US dollar was no longer gold backed. People had to settle for dollars, rather than gold. Faith (in the dollar) replaced substance, or real value.

In other words, the Bretton Woods Agreement lasted only 25 years from 1946–1971. The Bretton Woods Agreement was gutted by the Vietnam war. The gold-backed dollar was then replaced by the petro-dollar in 1973 by an agreement with Saudi Arabia to sell all oil in US dollars only. By forcing oil-importing nations to use dollars to pay for oil, the US dollar remained the world reserve currency.

Another 45 years have now passed (2016), and in recent years the US government has used its domination of money to impose its will (hegemony) upon other nations. Those who would not comply were invaded or sanctioned. Much discontent has arisen because of this.

In 2010 the US government’s determination to retain control of its hegemonic empire caused China to decide to set up a separate world order. They planned for an alternative to the IMF, the SWIFT payment system, and the London Gold Exchange. US sanctions on Russia in 2014 brought Russia and China into a solid alliance to overthrow the US dollar as the world currency. The US government’s use of sanctions caused the kings from the east to rise up against Babylon.

Cracks in the Babylonian Wall

The uprising against Babylon began to be felt by the end of 2014, just as the “seven times” was ending. On July 22, 2014 we reached the 70-year anniversary of the Bretton Woods Agreement. The Shanghai Gold Exchange went live two months later on September 18, 2014.

The transfer of authority from Babylon to the saints of the Most High came into effect on the eighth day of Tabernacles, October 16, 2014. A week later, on October 24, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) was launched by China.

These recent developments occurred 70 years from the Bretton Woods Agreement from 1944–1946. These starting dates suggest that whatever started in 2014 ought to be completed by 2017.

One of the most important shifts occurred on March 12, 2015, when the UK announced its decision to join the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), after President Obama had urged them to boycott it. Other nations followed the UK's lead within weeks, and when the AIIB officially opened on December 26, 2015, its founding membership was up to 30 nations. (The bank was fully launched on January 16, 2016.) By the time of its launch, its membership had increased to 57 members, representing 62% of the world's economy, with another 27 expecting to ratify their membership by the end of 2016, when the AIIB member nations will represent 70% of the world's economy.

The UK's decision to join the AIIB was a startling rupture in the cohesiveness of Babylonian policy. The UK essentially switched sides and joined with the kings from the east. They did so again on June 23, 2016 when the UK decided to leave Europe. This was the so-called "Brexit." All that remains (as of this writing) is for them to join the BRICS alliance for this to be complete. Babylon is falling apart.

China has also established an international payment system called CIPS, "China International Payment System," which is an alternative to the SWIFT system that is controlled by the top Babylonian bankers in the West. The SWIFT system channels all international payments through the Federal Reserve, which gives it enormous power and allows it to lay economic sanctions on any nation it pleases. But with the CIPS in place, there is now an alternative payment system. The CIPS system thus removes an enormous weapon from the hands of Babylon.

Short History of World Currencies

These present changes are leading up to a truly historical moment that will change the course of world history. In the 1400's first Portugal's money and then Spain's became accepted internationally as a world currency. But each fell in its turn and was replaced. Then in 1517 (the end of the Thyatira era and the start of Sardis in Scripture), the first Dutch guilder became internationally accepted as a world currency.

This lasted until the British began to rule the seas in the late 1700's, and the British pound's world currency status lasted until World War II. The demise of the British pound began in November of 1914 as soon as the Federal Reserve Banks were fully established. Prior to then, gold flowed from New York to London. In November 1914 gold began to flow from London to New York. This continued for 30 years until the US dollar officially replaced the pound as the world reserve currency.

With London largely destroyed by World War II, confidence in the pound plummeted. The United States came through World War II without any loss of infrastructure, and it had by far the most gold reserves. So the Bretton Woods Agreement made the US dollar the new reserve currency in 1944–1946. See the graph here.

<https://azizonomics.com/2012/01/04/a-history-of-reserve-currencies-in-one-graph/>

That was 70 years ago. The time of the US dollar's dominance is coming to a close, as more and more nations lose confidence in it, switching their allegiance to the new basket of currencies advocated by China and Russia. The IMF was forced to recognize China's renminbi as one of the world currencies on December 30, 2015. It goes into effect in October 2016.

This is how Babylon is being overthrown by the kings from the east. Instead of declaring a war using their militaries, which they know would be very destructive to all, they have decided to overthrow the US dollar, which empowers the US military machine. The Babylonian hidden rulers know this, and this is why they have instructed the US government leaders to poke everyone in the eye and to fan flames in every hot spot of the world. They are trying to spark World War III in a vain attempt to maintain power.

China's economic and financial policies are designed to elevate them to a position of prestige and power in the 21st century without a destructive war. It is a policy that suggests the pattern of the Medes and Persians when overthrowing Babylon without destroying the city.

James Davidson's Analysis

James Davidson is a founding member and head of the National Taxpayers Union. In the late 1980's everyone laughed at him when he predicted the collapse of the Soviet Union. But he was right. Now he openly talks about the replacement of the US dollar within the coming year (2016–2017). He says that China and Russia have a four-step plan:

1. Ignore the Bretton Woods Agreement and begin trading in their own currencies, rather than in US dollars. Because Nixon in 1971 had already decided to ignore Bretton Woods by abandoning the gold standard, the US could only complain hypocritically.
2. Create their own International Monetary Fund (IMF). They did so by creating the AIIB in 2015.
3. Create their own global currency (that is, a basket of currencies including the yuan).
4. Sell US dollars (bonds) and trigger the collapse of the US dollar.

The first two items on the list were completed in 2015. The third is to be completed by October 2016, and this clears the way for them to collapse the US dollar itself. This will cause the rest of the nations to lose confidence in the dollar, and they will then demand a new world currency—which is ready to be implemented by the AIIB.

Of course, there are always unforeseen problems and/or solutions that may surface at the same time. But this is his analysis, based on past experience. He says this collapse will be three times as bad as the 1929 crash, because back in 1929 the US dollar was still gold backed and was not the world reserve currency. Today the collapsing structure is far bigger. Trying to contemplate or plan for the *un-reserving* of the mammoth US dollar supply is difficult, because this event is unique in history.

I see these things in biblical terms, rather than in purely economic terms. To me, this is important because it is what is happening just as the seven times is expiring and Babylon is falling.

By studying Scripture, we are able to see how the New World Order is falling and is being replaced by the Next World Order. What world leaders fail to see is that even this will only be *a transition into the New Kingdom Order*. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit will take the world by surprise, but those who are watchful will help to facilitate this great change.

Book 7

A study of Revelation 17–19.

Chapter 1: The Harlot

The fall of Mystery Babylon, which is depicted as a great harlot, is covered in considerable detail in Revelation 17–19 leading to the second coming of Christ. Revelation 16 records (and prophesies) the legal complaints lodged against Babylon in the divine court, along with the verdicts decreed against the city. The next three chapters give us details of the fall of the harlot-bride and the rise of the true bride, the New Jerusalem.

[Revelation 17:1](#), [2](#) begins by saying,

¹ And one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and spoke with me, saying, “Come here, I shall show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, ² with whom the kings of the earth committed acts of immorality, and those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her immorality.”

The sequence of decrees against Babylon reached a climax at the end of Revelation 16. Now an angel calls John aside to give him more specific details about the identity of the great harlot and to show him the manner of her fall from power. John was non-specific, but he tells us that this angel was one of the seven who poured a bowl of wine upon Babylon ([Rev. 15:7](#)). My own revelation indicates that this was actually the first of the seven, known to me as the Redemption Angel.

The Redemption Angel reveals all of the information in chapter 17, culminating in [Rev. 17:18](#), which says,

¹⁸ “And the woman whom you saw is the great city, which reigns over the kings of the earth.”

In other words, Babylon is pictured as a woman, a harlot, and a city. The woman is not a literal woman, although in the types and shadows of past prophecy, Jezebel stands out as a main representative of this harlot. Even the “city” itself is figurative, because it is more than a city. The ancient city of Babylon was a type of an entire world system. Yet these biblical metaphors are important from a legal standpoint, because they invoke certain laws by which harlots and cities may be judged.

One such law, as we have already explained, is the law of redemption as applied to urban property in [Lev. 25:29, 30, 31](#). Buying urban property gives the previous owner a one-year right of redemption. Babylon is a city. So this law prophesies the manner in which the Redemption Angel overthrows Babylon. In a sense, the *arnion* (Christ and His body) have purchased urban property. In fact, they have purchased (or redeemed) the entire city, which means that certain laws must be followed.

When we held our Jubilee Prayer Campaign on November 21–29, 1993, we understood that we were “purchasing urban property” and this is how we knew that we would see the actual results one year later (Nov. 29, 1994). This waiting period coincided with and was supported by the prophecy in [Dan. 4:29](#). The same principle applied in October 2014 when the transfer of authority gave jurisdiction over the earth to the overcomers at the end of the “seven times” of divine judgment. We knew that we would have to wait another year to allow the “city” its redemption rights in case they might redeem their property.

While some may think all of this to be absurd, we must remind everyone that the law prophesies, because it is the guideline by which God judges men, nations, and the world itself. Any time we speak of divine judgment, it should be understood that God judges by *His* law, not by the laws of men. Therefore, His law is more than just a moral standard for men to follow; it is also prophetic, because it sets forth the parameters of divine justice when the divine court issues its rulings.

As we will see later, other angels besides the Redemption Angel have their role in this divine judgment. There were seven who poured out the bowls of wine and judgment. In Revelation 17–20 we see four angels participating in the judgment: the Redemption Angel in 17:1, an “*angel having great authority*” in 18:1, and “*a strong angel*” in 18:21, and finally, an angel “*having the key of the abyss*” in 20:1. We will say more of these as we proceed.

The Great Harlot

The Redemption Angel is the first to identify Babylon as a *harlot* in [Rev. 17:1](#). She “*sits on many waters*,” and this is later interpreted in [Rev. 17:15](#),

¹⁵ And he said to me, “The waters which you saw where the harlot sits, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues.”

Hence, just as the harlot herself is not literal, neither are these waters on which she sits. The metaphor is seen in [Isaiah 57:20, 21](#),

²⁰ But the wicked are like the tossing sea, for it cannot be quiet; and its waters toss up refuse and mud.

²¹ “There is no peace,” says my God, “for the wicked.”

As long as the nations are in rebellion against the Creator and the Messiah, refusing to be ruled by the divine law, there can be no lasting peace. There can be only one law, and it is only when the Prince of Peace rules that we will enter an era of peace. This is prophesied in [Gen. 49:10](#) in the prophecy of the coming of “Shiloh,” a word that is based on *shalom*, “peace,” and speaks of a peacemaker. The Prince of Peace is pictured later by Solomon and his peaceful reign.

The harlot not only sits on “*many waters*,” but also is seen “*sitting on a scarlet beast*” in [Rev. 17:3](#),

³ And he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness; and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast, full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns.

The scarlet beast, then, is the equivalent of the waters. The difference is that the waters speak generally of the nations in turmoil, while the scarlet beast seems to speak more specifically of a *group* of nations. That this is the same woman as in verse 1 is evident in verse 5, where we see her labeled on her forehead. She is not only a “*great harlot*,” but is also “*the mother of harlots*.” She runs a kind of spiritual brothel for the kings of the earth.

Redeeming the Harlot

The harlot metaphor invokes specific laws by which Babylon is judged. The prophets speak of idolatry as adultery and harlotry. Idols are also called “abominations” in [2 Kings 23:13](#), where the Septuagint uses the same Greek word (*bdelugma*) that John uses in [Rev. 17:4](#). To worship idols or false gods was to commit adultery against the God who had married Israel at Sinai.

Hosea was a prophet to the House of Israel, whom God (Christ) had married. Hosea married a harlot ([Hosea 1:2](#)) in order to illustrate God’s failed marriage with Israel. His life experience set a prophetic precedent for future things—the great divorce ([Hos. 2:2](#)). He sent her out of the house ([Hos. 2:14](#)), but later redeemed her from bondage ([Hos. 3:1, 2](#)).

We see in Hosea the story of the redemption of the harlot, and this forms the backdrop for the book of Revelation as well, though few have eyes to see past the time of judgment. Yet it is the Redemption Angel who reveals these things to John and who also initiates the judgment in the first bowl of wine. His ultimate purpose is to redeem not only the House of Israel, but all that was lost in Adam—that is, the whole earth. Meanwhile, however, as with Hosea’s wife, there is a time of divine judgment which is the main theme on the surface of Revelation 17–20.

Marriage and the High Priest

Jesus Christ is our High Priest after the Order of Melchizedek ([Heb. 7:17](#)). [Rev. 21:9](#) also speaks of “*the bride, the wife of the Lamb*.” The fact that our High Priest (along with His body) has a wife brings up certain legal requirements that appear to be an impediment to such a marriage. [Lev. 21:13–15](#) specifies what type of woman a high priest is allowed to marry:

¹³ And he shall take a wife in her virginity. ¹⁴ A widow, or a divorced woman, or one who is profaned by harlotry, these he may not take; but rather he is to marry a virgin of his own people; ¹⁵ that he may not profane his offspring among his people; for I am the Lord who sanctifies him.”

Scripture makes it clear, especially in the book of Hosea, that the House of Israel was a harlot and therefore ineligible as a wife of our great High Priest. Furthermore, [Hosea 2:2](#) and [Jer. 3:8](#) speak of Israel’s divorce, again making her ineligible. The law itself in [Deut. 24:4](#) forbids a man to take back his former wife whom he has divorced lawfully. There are many laws that raise barriers against Israel’s eligibility to remarry her original Husband.

Yet Christ has a bride, and [Hosea 2:19](#) says that Christ will again “*betroth*” her to Himself “*in righteousness*.” How can He do this without violating His law? The answer was not clearly revealed until Christ died on the cross and was raised again as a New Creation. This biblical enigma was covertly revealed by Isaiah, though hardly understood until centuries later. Isaiah 53 speaks of the death of the Messiah, and in the next chapter God calls Israel a “widow,” saying in [Isaiah 54:4–7](#),

⁴ “Fear not, for you will not be put to shame; neither feel humiliated, for you will not be disgraced; but you will forget the shame of your youth, and the reproach of your widowhood you will remember no more. ⁵ For your husband is your Maker, whose name is the Lord [Yahweh] of hosts; and your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel, who is called the God of all the earth. ⁶ For the Lord has called you, like a wife forsaken and grieved in spirit, even like a wife of one’s youth when she is rejected,” says your God. ⁷ “For a brief moment I forsook you, but with great compassion I will gather you.”

Here Israel is pictured as a widow, whose husband is Yahweh of hosts, “*the God of all the earth*.” God had forsaken Israel “*for a brief moment*,” on account of her adultery, but in the end “*with great compassion I will gather you*.” This was accomplished by a law hardly contemplated by the scribes and Pharisees in their messianic debates. Divorce papers end marriage contracts ([Deut. 24:1–4](#)), but so also does death. [Rom. 7:2](#) says,

² For the married woman is bound by law to her husband while he is living; but if her husband dies, she is released from the law concerning her husband.

Therefore, when Jesus Christ died, many things happened. First, Israel became a widow. Second, Israel was released from her Old Covenant marriage at Sinai. Third, Christ Himself, who had been Israel’s Husband, became a New Creation and was thereafter legally recognized as *another Person*. As such He was eligible by law to marry His former spouse, for the law saw no violation of [Deut. 24:4](#) in this.

There are so many different facets of law and prophecy that are playing out at the same time that it is difficult to separate them all. Israel was divorced, but because Judah and Israel had split into two nations, the Judah portion was not divorced from God.

The prophecies of the House of Israel usually follow the divorce theme, and her problem was that the law forbids a man to reclaim his divorced wife. Judah, however, was still technically “married” when Jesus Christ died on the cross. Even though Judah had been in rebellion against Christ while hypocritically giving lip service to the law, God could not divorce Judah without endangering the legal status of Christ who yet had to be born through her. If God had divorced Judah and then later begat Christ through his ex-wife, Jesus would have been legally illegitimate.

Judah became a widow after she killed her Husband. She needed no divorce, because her Husband was already dead, so this, I believe, is why the New Testament says nothing about giving (fleshly) Judah a divorce. Nonetheless, she was cast out of the house in 70 A.D.

When Christ rose from the dead as a New Creation, He began to prepare for another great marriage. Those who love Him and have faith in Him as the Mediator of the New Covenant are eligible to marry Him at the wedding in [Rev. 21:2, 3](#). This is the manner in which He will fulfill His promise to Israel, but this time the nation of Israel will be enlarged to include anyone who immigrates to the Kingdom of God ([Isaiah 56:6, 7, 8](#)). Isaiah says that all immigrants are given equal rights in the Kingdom, because even natural-born Israelites have to come into the New Covenant in the same manner—by faith in Christ. There is no difference, no exemptions, and no privileged people.

All true believers, by definition, have died legally, for Paul says in [Rom. 6:7](#), “*he who died has been justified from sin*” (The Emphatic Diaglott). In other words, one cannot retain the old man and expect to be a citizen of the Kingdom. The old man must die and the new man must be begotten by the Spirit in order to be eligible to receive this Kingdom inheritance. Those who think the old flesh man (Adam or Israel) will inherit the Kingdom are trying to claim the inheritance for the “harlot.”

The harlot is a counterfeit bride, whose children believe that she is the mother of the inheritors. The harlot takes many forms, all ruled by the flesh through the Old Covenant. Babylon and Jerusalem are two major forms of the harlot. But they are being cast down even now and exposed by the Redemption Angel.

The Harlotry of Flesh

As we have already shown, harlotry takes more than one form. Idolatry is harlotry when viewed in the light of being unfaithful in one’s marriage to God (Christ). On a national scale, ancient Israel often condoned spiritual adultery or harlotry whenever the kings condoned idolatry as part of the national religion. Harlotry, then, is an accurate description, whether we apply it to one’s personal life or to national life. The difference is that when the nation becomes a harlot, some individuals remain true to God, even if the majority are unfaithful by following the lead of the government.

On the deepest individual level, “*all have sinned*” ([Rom. 3:23](#)), and therefore all are guilty of harlotry. In other words, all have violated their Old Covenant oath to be obedient to God’s laws. Since the Old Covenant was a marriage covenant, in which Israel took “marriage vows,” any violation of the law is harlotry and spiritual adultery.

Since no one could be justified by their own will—their own vow of obedience—God instituted a second covenant that was guaranteed to succeed. The New Covenant was God’s vow to work in our hearts to change our very nature. We would become law compliant, not because we made vows with good intentions, but because God vowed to make it happen. Hence, the New Covenant is based on “*the promises of God*” ([2 Cor. 1:20](#)).

It is only when we see the promises of God in contrast to the promises of men that we can begin to understand the difference between the Old and New Covenants. Only the New Covenant can release us from personal harlotry.

The Old Covenant is a vow that the “old man” (Adamic nature) makes with God. The New Covenant is entirely different, though many think it is God’s promise to help the old man fulfill his vows and thereby become perfected. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Under the New Covenant a “new man” is begotten by the Spirit within our hearts, creating an entirely new identity that has a heavenly Father and an earthly mother. Although the “mother” is still Adamic, the Father’s seed that begets him is spiritual. Inheritance is passed down through one’s father, and so Adam’s liability for the first sin is passed down through the natural sperm of our Adamic identity—that is, the fleshly “old man.” The death penalty is the only thing that Adam’s seed can inherit by its identification with the first sinner.

However, the “new man” (KJV) or “new self” ([Eph. 4:24](#); [Col. 3:10](#)) is begotten by spiritual seed from the Spirit of God. Having God as his Father, “*he cannot sin*” ([1 John 3:9](#)), for it is not in his nature to do so. Therefore, each “new man” as well as the corporate New Creation Man are fully compliant with the laws of God, not out of compulsion, but because they “*joyfully concur with the law of God*” ([Rom. 7:22](#)). In other words, the new man is incapable of acting as a harlot, while the old man cannot help himself.

The High Priest Must Marry a Virgin

In [Lev. 21:14, 15](#) the high priest is commanded to “*marry a virgin of his own people, that he may not profane his offspring among the people.*” When we apply this law to our own great High Priest of the Melchizedek Order, we see that it would be unlawful for Him to marry anyone other than a virgin—no harlots, no widows, no divorced women. But Israel in the flesh became disqualified on every count to marry Christ. Hosea says Israel was a harlot, Isaiah says she was a widow, and Jeremiah says she was divorced. Yet Israel was given the promises of God, and [Isaiah 62:4, 5](#) says to them,

⁴ It will no longer be said to you, “Forsaken,” nor to your land will it any longer be said, “Desolate”; but you will be called “My delight is in her,” and your land, “Married”; for the Lord delights in you, and to Him your land will be married. ⁵ For as a young man marries a virgin, so your sons will marry you; and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so your God will rejoice over you.

Many other prophets, including Hosea, affirm this. But how can God remarry Israel and yet be true to Himself—that is, to His own law, which comes out of His righteous nature? Once Israel in the flesh became a harlot, a widow, and a divorced woman, she was *forever disqualified* as the bride of Christ. *In her Adamic flesh* she could never reverse course and become a virgin again. The New Covenant, however, offers a change of identity, an opportunity to become a New Creation, having a different Father, and thus avoiding the death inheritance from Adam.

How to be a Virgin

Those who place their faith in Christ—that is, in the promises of God, rather than in the promises of men—are begotten of God. This new man is not the outer man of flesh that walks this earth. Paul calls him “*the inner man*” ([Rom. 7:22](#)). He says also in [1 Cor. 15:50](#) that “*flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.*” Those who hold up their flesh as the basis of their claim to an inheritance in the Kingdom have a misplaced faith. Faith in flesh is not the kind of faith that can justify anyone. Faith in flesh only bestows the death penalty as part of Adam’s body.

The great harlot of Revelation 17 is primarily an oppressive world system based on fallen man that ultimately traces back to the sin of Adam. It is the corporate manifestation of Adam in all of its worst attributes, the harvest-ready fruit of corruptible seed. Yet we should never lose sight of the fact that this political-economic-social-judicial-religious harlot was made possible only by many individual flesh-creatures playing their role as little harlots.

In other words, no one can escape the fact that the great harlot of Revelation 17 is closer than we care to admit, for we all have two natures: fleshly and spiritual. In our lack of understanding, we all tend to identify with the flesh, saying, “I am of Adam,” or “I am of Israel” or “I am of Abraham” or “I am of this or that denomination.” We think that if we can just identify with great men or organizations of the past, we can somehow escape the sentence of death (mortality) that comes with such fleshly genealogy. That is the great illusion, the blindness, the veil that is spread out over the whole earth ([Isaiah 25:7, 8](#)).

Because the flesh man, tainted by Adam’s sin, has lost its virginity, our only hope is to become a new creation. The path of the Old Covenant cannot undo the loss of virginity. Only the New Covenant provides us a way to do this, and that holy seed which is begotten of God cannot lose its virginity to anyone other than its Husband, the great High Priest of the Order of Melchizedek. In this way the law is fulfilled, and the offspring of Christ and His bride are not profaned (i.e., they are not illegitimate).

And so, as we have already noted, the overcomers in [Rev. 14:4](#) are “virgins” (KJV) and thus are eligible to marry the High Priest as the bride of Christ.

Chapter 2: The Description of the Harlot

[Revelation 17:3](#) says,

³ And he [the angel] carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness; and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast, full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns.

In verse 5 this woman is identified as “Babylon.” John had to be taken to the wilderness to see her. Recall that in [Rev. 12:6](#) the woman who gave birth to the male child (Christ) “*fled into the wilderness.*” Later in [Rev. 12:14](#) we read that this same woman was “*nourished for a time and times and half a time*” in the wilderness.

The question is this: Is the Babylonian woman in Revelation 12 the same as the woman in Revelation 17? Both are in the wilderness. We are not told how the Babylonian woman arrived in the wilderness. The angel simply shows John the woman while she was in the wilderness. Those who place their faith in the church may have difficulty seeing them as the same woman, insisting that there were *two women* in the wilderness.

Yet when we consider the fact that this is obviously patterned after Israel’s wilderness experience under Moses, we should ask ourselves WHY this woman is in the wilderness? Israel had to go through the wilderness to get to the Promised Land, but if she had been able to hear the voice of God in [Exodus 20:18–21](#), she would have had the faith to enter the Promised Land after just 490 days (from Pentecost of the first year to Tabernacles of the second year). She would not have had to spend 40 years in the wilderness.

In [Rev. 12:6](#) John implies that the church-woman fled from the serpent’s persecution. But why would she need to spend so much time in the wilderness? Did she share Israel’s lack of faith? Was she afraid to hear God’s voice and be led by the Spirit? We know this has been a church problem, not only because she was following Israel’s lead, but also because actual history proves this. Quite early, church officials removed from the people the right to hear God’s voice for themselves. The people were told to listen to their leaders, who were supposed to tell them what God said.

The only possible difference is that Israel was too *afraid* to hear God for themselves, whereas the church was *not allowed* to hear God for themselves. Yet the result was the same, because lack of hearing will always result in a shortage of faith to enter the Promised Land. It is not that Israel lacked justifying faith, for they had all kept Passover. But at Mount Sinai nearly all of them were too afraid of hearing God for themselves and thus lacked *Pentecostal faith* which would have trained them for the highest level—*Tabernacles faith*. This was why they were unable to enter God’s rest at that time.

Paul says in [Rom. 1:17](#) that “*the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith.*” It seems to me that there are three main levels of faith, each necessary to experience a different feast day.

Israel’s lack of faith caused them to worship the golden calf shortly after failing to hear God for themselves. In fact, their shortage of faith during their entire wilderness wandering meant that most were led by the flesh, rather than by the Spirit. The flesh is always an inner “harlot” that leads us to worship the golden calf, for she is motivated by the love of money, which is the root of all evil. On a corporate scale, the church has had the same problem throughout the entire church age. In fact, this is one of the main themes of John’s Revelation.

The same Israel (including Judah) that brought forth both David and Jesus is the nation that worshiped the golden calf under Moses and later became Hosea’s harlot. Is it then difficult to believe that the same carnality and harlotry might be found in the church? Just as Israel and Judah were cast out for their national harlotry, so also has the church as a whole been disqualified from ruling the Kingdom. Paul says that only the remnant of grace—the overcomers—were truly “chosen” in the days of Elijah. The same is true today in the context of the church.

There are always two men, two women, two cities, or two other manifestations (natural and spiritual) which compete for the inheritance. In each dispute, both characters believe that they are called or “chosen” to be the inheritor of the earth. But only one is truly called. The other usurps the calling, but must give way at some point in time.

So here in [Rev. 17:3](#) we see that the church, which fled into the wilderness shortly after Pentecost in Acts 2, was not able to enter the Kingdom at that time, but like Israel, she had to spend a long time in the wilderness. That in itself is an indictment upon the church. Whereas Israel spent just 40 years in the wilderness, the church spent 40 Jubilee cycles in the wilderness.

The time given by John for her wilderness experience is “*a time and times and half a time*” (12:14). As we noted in Revelation 13, the religious (church) beast rising from the sea spoke arrogantly and blasphemously for 42 months, which is 1,260 years or 3½ “times.” In other words, the church came into power in 529–534 A.D. under Justinian, and became known in Daniel’s revelation as the “little horn.” This was when the church, on account of its religious carnality, became part of the Babylonian succession of empires.

So the harlot is pictured sitting (or really *riding*) on a beast, rather than upon a throne. She is carried by the beast system. Because a throne is a symbol of law, she is, in essence, *lawless*, but yet she follows the carnal laws of the beast system. She is begotten by flesh, not by the Spirit. The red beast that she rides is “*full of blasphemous names*,” showing that there are many manifestations of immorality and lawlessness in this beast.

Because she rides this beast, her throne is pictured as *movable*. This contrasts with the throne of the Ancient of Days that is *immovable*, being built upon a sure foundation. The law depicts the character of God, which is unchanging ([Mal. 3:6](#)), though its forms and applications changed in the ways shown in the book of Hebrews. Hence, the law is also pictured as fire, which changes its appearance and its form, but not its character.

The beast itself is a corporate beast, for it has “*seven heads and ten horns*,” which are later interpreted to mean “*seven mountains*” (17:9), i.e., “*seven kings*” (17:10). The ten horns are “*ten kings*” (17:12). We will say more of this later. It is enough for now to point out that the harlot rides this corporate beast that includes many kings or kingdoms.

The great harlot is more than the church, but it certainly includes it. Even so, there are also overcomers in each generation, whom God has raised up, like the 7,000 in the days of Elijah, to carry the word of the Lord and to be the actual inheritors of the Kingdom. Hence, the overcomers are not to be viewed as being part of this harlot city.

The Description of the Harlot

[Revelation 17:4](#) describes the harlot’s clothing this way:

⁴ And the woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a gold cup full of abominations and of the unclean things of her immorality.

Purple and scarlet robes speak of royalty, while “*gold and precious stones and pearls*” speak of great wealth. The red robes of the Roman cardinals and the pope’s purple robes indicate a literal fulfillment of John’s description.

The “*gold cup*” in the harlot’s hand is more symbolic and prophetic than literal, although there is no doubt that literal gold cups have been used, not only in Rome, but also in most royal houses. The important thing is to see that John’s reference to the gold cup is taken from [Jer. 51:7](#),

⁷ Babylon has been a golden cup in the hand of the Lord, intoxicating all the earth. The nations have drunk of her wine; therefore the nations are going mad.

Earlier, the prophet told Jerusalem in [Jer. 25:15](#),

¹⁵ For thus the Lord, the God of Israel, says to me, “Take this cup of the wine of wrath from My hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send you, to drink it.” ¹⁶ And they shall drink and stagger and go mad because of the sword that I will send among them.” ¹⁷ Then I took the cup from the Lord’s hand and made all the nations drink, to whom the Lord sent me: ¹⁸ Jerusalem and the cities of Judah ...

The prophecy shows that Babylon itself is compared to a golden cup in God’s hand. In other words, Babylon was the instrument of divine judgment upon Judah, and all the nations were required to drink from it ([Jer. 25:28](#)). So it is called the “*cup of the wine of wrath*,” designed to make the nations drunk and “*go mad*.”

In [Rev. 17:4](#) the harlot holds the golden cup, by which “*those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her immorality*” ([Rev. 17:2](#)). Wine and other forms of alcohol tend to break down one’s inhibitions and moral standards, so we find the harlot giving the nations her “wine.” Yet we should not lose sight of the fact that the gold cup belonged to God, who then gave it to the harlot in order to bring judgment upon the nations.

Chapter 3: The Harlot and Her Daughters

John shows the harlot's mark of identity in [Rev. 17:5](#),

⁵ and upon her forehead a name was written, a mystery, “BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.”

She is Babylon, a spiritual harlot who has given birth to children in her own image and is therefore called also “*the mother of harlots*.” She is also the mother “*of the abominations of the earth*.” An abomination is a Hebrew euphemism for *an idol*, so this harlot seems to be the mother of all idolatry in the earth. Her harlot children, then, seem to be the seductive call to idolatry in all of its forms of expression.

It is obvious that the great harlot is more than a single city like the ancient city of Babylon. Jerusalem, Rome, London, and Washington D.C. do not describe her limits, for idolatry goes beyond all the power centers of the world. John hinted of this earlier in [Rev. 11:8](#), where he even linked “*Sodom and Egypt*” with the earthly Jerusalem. Any man, any religion, and any nation or city that worships other gods and submits to their laws above the laws of the Creator are idolatrous by nature, having been seduced by one of the great harlot's daughters.

Tyre as a Harlot City

[Isaiah 23:15–17](#) says,

¹⁵ Now it will come about in that day that Tyre will be forgotten for seventy years like the days of one king. At the end of seventy years it will happen to Tyre as in the song of the harlot: ¹⁶ Take your harp, walk about the city, O forgotten harlot; pluck the strings skillfully, sing many songs, that you may be remembered. ¹⁷ And it will come about at the end of seventy years that the Lord will visit Tyre. Then she will go back to her harlot's wages, and will play the harlot with all the kingdoms on the face of the earth.

When Tyre was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, she lost her independence and had to pander to the lusts and desires of her conquerors and neighboring cities or nations. This lasted seventy years, after which time, instead of repenting, she was now paid fairly—“*harlot's wages*”—while under Persian rule. In fact, the Persians under King Cyrus commanded Tyre and Sidon to contribute toward the rebuilding of the temple ([Ezra 3:7](#)). [Isaiah 23:18](#) predicts this:

¹⁸ And her gain and her harlot's wages will be set apart to the Lord; it will not be stored up or hoarded [for her own use], but her gain will become sufficient food and choice attire for those who dwell in the presence of the Lord.

The prophecies about Tyre no longer apply to that ancient city, for it has long been deserted, and its ruins cast into the sea. However, the spirit of Tyre lives on as one of the great harlot's daughters, and the prophecies apply to Mystery Babylon itself. In the end, the assets of Babylon, after being taken over by the kings from the east, will also be used to fund and build the Kingdom of God upon the earth.

Nineveh as a Harlot City

Nahum's prophecy is “*the oracle of Nineveh*” ([Nahum 1:1](#)). In [Nahum 3:1](#) and [4](#) we read,

¹ Woe to the bloody city, completely full of lies and pillage; her prey never departs... ⁴ All because of the many harlotries of the harlot, the charming one, the mistress of sorceries, who sells nations by her harlotries and families by her sorceries.

Nineveh was the capital of Assyria. The city itself is no longer important, but it is the same spirit of harlotry seen in Babylon and Tyre. In fact, we should equate “*the mistress of sorceries*” with the great harlot of [Rev. 17, 18](#). John tells us in [Rev. 18:23](#) that the great harlot is judged, “*because all the nations were deceived by your sorcery*.”

Nineveh is also called “*the bloody city*,” which is Ezekiel’s term for the earthly Jerusalem ([Ezekiel 22:2](#); [24:6, 9](#)). So John says in [Rev. 18:24](#) about the great harlot:

²⁴ And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints and of all who have been slain on the earth.

We will say more of this at the appropriate time. For now, it is sufficient to equate Nineveh with the earthly Jerusalem, as both were called prophetically, “*the bloody city*.”

Jerusalem as a Harlot City

We have already shown from Hosea’s prophecy that Israel was a harlot. But Ezekiel 16 presents Jerusalem as a harlot as well. Jerusalem is specifically addressed in [Ezekiel 16:3](#), telling how God had brought her forth and had cared for her from birth. [Ezekiel 16:15](#) then says,

¹⁵ But you trusted in your beauty and played the harlot because of your fame, and you poured out your harlotries on every passer-by who might be willing.

[Ezekiel 16:26–29](#) continues,

²⁶ You also played the harlot with the Egyptians, your lustful neighbors, and multiplied your harlotry to make Me angry ²⁸ Moreover, you played the harlot with the Assyrians because you were not satisfied; you even played the harlot with them and still were not satisfied. ²⁹ You also multiplied your harlotry with the land of merchants, Chaldea, yet even with this you were not satisfied.

It is a long chapter, but it all points to the fact that Jerusalem was a harlot city, and for this reason John equates it with Babylon, Sodom, and Egypt as part of the final beast manifestation before the Kingdom of God is established. Tyre, Nineveh, and Jerusalem are best pictured as three daughters of the great Harlot. They all take after their mother.

The Capitalized Letters

Why is MYSTERY BABYLON capitalized? The original New Testament Greek language itself was written in all capitalized letters. A later innovation brought upper and lower case letters, along with punctuation marks. I do not know why, from a scholarly point of view, most translations of [Rev. 17:5](#) use all capitalized letters to identify MYSTERY BABYLON. However, from a legal perspective, the use of all capitalized letters indicate that it is a *corporation*.

The modern system of Babylonian slavery cannot deal with real living people, so it has created corporations for each individual, using their name in all capital letters. (Check your drivers license.) When we sign our names under an all-caps name, we give life to this corporation by affirming that “this is me,” that is to say, “this corporate entity represents me in my dealings with the Babylonian corporation.”

Perhaps the real question is whether or not the Bible translators who first put MYSTERY BABYLON in all capitalized letters understood the legal implications of this. I do not know, but I find it particularly appropriate, for whether this was done inadvertently or not, it seemed to prophesy and reveal the corporate (dead) nature of MYSTERY BABYLON.

The Drunken Harlot

[Revelation 17:6](#) says,

⁶ And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus. And when I saw her, I wondered greatly.

The dead corporation of MYSTERY BABYLON lives by drinking the blood of the saints and martyrs (witnesses). [Lev. 17:10](#), [11](#) forbids drinking blood, saying,

¹⁰ And any man from the house of Israel, or from the aliens who sojourn among them, who eats any blood, I will set My face against that person who eats blood, and I will cut him off from among his people.

¹¹ For the life [*nephesh*, “soul”] of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life [*nephesh*] that makes atonement.

God did not create blood to be consumed, but to represent the soul in its work of atonement. This law applied not only to Israelites but to “aliens” as well. So in the first Church Council in Acts 15, the apostles determined in [Acts 15:19](#), [20](#),

¹⁹ Therefore it is my judgment that we do not trouble those who are turning to God from among the Gentiles, ²⁰ but that we write to them that they abstain from things contaminated by idols and from fornication and from what is strangled and from blood.

This is repeated in [Acts 15:29](#). It is strange, then, that the Roman church, which fiercely enforced its Church Councils, failed to enforce the first Council in Jerusalem. They enforced those Councils that established creeds determined by carnal methods, but they ignored the one true Council that established a ban on eating blood. Perhaps they were unwilling to submit to the ban on fornication as well.

We have already quoted [Rev. 18:24](#), which makes the great harlot responsible for “*all who have been slain on the earth*,” along with the “prophets” and “saints.” This dates the problem before Jerusalem was even built, taking it back to the pattern of all martyrdoms that was set when Cain killed Abel. The bloody cities of Jerusalem and Nineveh were only the daughters of their mother before them. Nineveh killed many people, but Jerusalem killed the prophets ([Matt. 23:37](#)). For this reason, the earthly Jerusalem is clearly a daughter of the great harlot who is liable for the death of the prophets.

To drink blood is an earthly sign of a spiritual problem, for Scripture speaks of murder as an act of drinking blood. Hence, when Jerusalem killed the prophets, the city violated the law, which threatened to cut off anyone who drank blood. When the prophets called Jerusalem “*the bloody city*,” they were accusing it of drinking blood, and by extension they were saying that the city would be “*cut off from among his people*” ([Lev. 17:10](#)).

It is for this reason that the New Jerusalem (“Sarah”) is the true mother of the Kingdom, not the earthly Jerusalem (“Hagar”) in Galatians 4, for Sarah is not the persecutor of the saints. It was Ishmael, “*he who was born according to the flesh*” ([Gal. 4:29](#)), who “persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit” (Isaac).

We will study this in greater depth when we study Revelation 18. It is sufficient for now to see that Jerusalem and Babylon are closely tied together and are both held liable in the overthrow of this great harlot.

Chapter 4: Grace for the Harlot

In [Rev. 17:5](#), the term *Babylon the Great* has a numeric value of 276 x 5. It carries the same numeric value as “*the whole world*” in [Rev. 16:14](#). This shows the extent of Babylon’s influence and power. In fact, the entire verse carries a numeric value of 276 x 40.

Whenever 276 is built into the text of Scripture, it speaks of the flesh. The number appears only once ([Acts 27:37](#)) on the surface of Scripture, but it is often seen hidden in the numeric values of the text itself. Those 276 souls aboard the ship represent all flesh in the stormy history of humanity and its ships of state.

So it is not surprising to see Babylon (or the harlot) associated with 276, because all of her daughters are only specific manifestations of the flesh, all of whom have usurped control over men, governments, religions, and the earth itself.

[Rev. 17:5](#) itself carries a numeric value of 276 x 40, and the number 40 means “trial, probation,” indicating that Babylon’s time, like that of Israel in the wilderness, is temporary. Israel was on probation for 40 years; Babylon has been given a set amount of time in which to bring forth the fruit of the Spirit, if indeed that were possible.

The specific term *Babylon the Great*, with its numeric value of 276 x 5, includes the idea of grace (5). This may suggest that the great harlot, like the Israel harlot in Hosea’s story, will be redeemed in the end when, as God says in [Acts 2:17](#), “*I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh*” (KJV). In other words, all flesh (people) will be redeemed from the flesh—that is, from their own flesh. The problem of the flesh is that it has been condemned to death (mortality) through Adam’s sin, but yet it desires to rule as if Adam’s sin never happened. It cannot accept the judgment of God, but usurps the Spirit’s leading role.

We know that “*the whole world*” (276 x 5) in [Rev. 16:14](#) is the same world that Jesus came to save ([1 John 2:2](#)) by His grace. Anyone who thinks that the world is too corrupt and too far gone to be saved does not truly understand the overwhelming power of the cross. While the religious world loves to point out the harlotry in their rival religions or denominations, the fact is that the whole world has been ruled by the flesh. No one is exempt.

Whose Will Succeeds?

Most religions set forth their own perceived path toward salvation, based first on the will of man and then upon his ability to follow through on his decision. The Old Covenant takes many forms, but they all have this in common. The New Covenant, however, is based upon grace, depicted by the number 5. Paul illustrates such grace in [Rom. 9:10–12](#) by treating the story of Jacob and Esau as a prophetic allegory, much like he did with Hagar and Sarah in Galatians 4.

¹⁰ And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father, Isaac; ¹¹ for though the twins were not yet born, and had not done anything good or bad, in order that God’s purpose according to His choice might stand, not because of works, but because of Him who calls, ¹² it was said to her, “The older will serve the younger.”

In other words, it was God’s choice, made by His will alone, which called Jacob and rejected Esau. His choice was made before the children could do either good or bad. Even so, Jacob was a usurper, supplanter, and deceiver *even while he was a believer*, and this did not fully change until he wrestled with the angel and received a new name, *Israel*. *Israel* means “God rules,” and as long as he carried that name, he testified of the sovereignty of God and the fact that he had been chosen by the will of God before he was even born.

We see in this story that God’s will was the single original cause, but afterward God followed through on His choice, working with Jacob until his will conformed to the will of God. Jacob would never have become Israel, nor would his character have ever changed, had it not been for God’s decision to remake him into another vessel. Yes, it involved Jacob’s will, but his will was being shaped by God’s will. When God’s work was complete, the angel redeemed him from all evil ([Gen. 48:16](#)), as he himself testified as he blessed Ephraim and Manasseh.

Chosen and Called to Bless

The story of Jacob and Esau establishes an important principle about the character, the will, and the actions of God that few really comprehend. If God can work in this way with Jacob, then what about Esau? And by extension, what about this great harlot? In fact, what about the beast that she rides? Since they, like Esau, were not “chosen,” does this mean that they cannot be saved? Not at all. To be chosen means that one is blessed with the responsibility to dispense God’s blessings to all the families of the earth ([Gen. 12:3](#); [Acts 3:25, 26](#)).

In other words, Jacob was called in order to bless Esau. Isaac was chosen in order to bless Ishmael. The overcomers are called in order to bless the harlot and her scarlet beast—the kingdoms of this world. This point is very important as we study the divine judgment upon Babylon and the beast systems, so that our study is not taken as a call to take up stones against the great harlot or any of her daughters.

Because of all the persecution and destruction that the beast systems have done, our flesh naturally demands retribution and vengeance without purposeful correction and restoration. But Jesus loved harlots, as also did Hosea, and the mind of Christ shows that “*God so loved the world*” ([John 3:16](#)). The same world that He will judge will also be restored. The kingdoms that are presently ruled by flesh have been redeemed and will be ruled by Christ ([Rev. 11:15](#)).

The first “week” of earth history (7,000 years) is designed to seek out the chosen ones FIRST. God has called them and trained them (as with Jacob) for ministry, and when the full body of overcomers is complete, they will be a living temple, “*a house of prayer for all the peoples*” ([Isaiah 56:7](#)), a temple which Solomon envisioned in his prayer ([1 Kings 8:41, 42, 43](#)), but which failed because it was only made of wood and stone. Solomon’s materials, for all their beauty and grandeur, were inferior to the “*living stones*” that God has been shaping for His final habitation.

Hence, rather than cast stones at the great harlot, we ought to recognize the grace factor inherent in the 276 x 5 that is hidden in the text that identifies her as “*Babylon the great*.” All flesh is a harlot, and she insists that she is the bride of Christ. She insists that her daughters (children of flesh) are the rightful inheritors of the earth, based upon the original calling given to Adam prior to his sin ([Gen. 2:15](#)).

But this is not so. Adam was condemned to death, and all of his household with him. His entire estate (the earth) was sold to make payment on his debt ([Matt. 18:24, 25](#)). But Christ came as the “last Adam” ([1 Cor. 15:45](#)) to undo all that the first Adam had done and to redeem all that had been sold into bondage to pay Adam’s debt. Hence, [1 Cor. 15:22, 23](#) says,

²² For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive. ²³ But each in his own order ...

Hagar, who allegorically represents the flesh, is thus a “bond woman” ([Gal. 4:22](#)) in need of redemption. While it is true that the children of the flesh must be cast out, along with their mother, the underlying purpose for this is to empower Isaac with the birthright, so that he may bless Ishmael and, by extension, all who are in bondage.

The overcomers are not called to cast stones at the great harlot or her scarlet beast. They are called to be a blessing to all families of the earth, to use the birthright according to the mind and will of God. But to do this, the overcomers must be trained by God, even as Jacob was trained, for no one was born an overcomer, even if chosen before birth.

All are born fleshly, even as Jacob, and the path toward becoming *Israel* can be long and difficult. Fortunately for all of us, God has taken the responsibility to make it happen, as Paul says in [1 Thess. 5:24](#),

²⁴ Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.

The New Covenant is God’s promise, or vow, and He has taken the responsibility upon Himself to change our hearts and to transform us from Adamic children into the Sons of God. Adamic children are begotten by the flesh and by the will of man. The Sons of God are begotten by their heavenly Father through the Holy Spirit.

A covenant rules both groups of sons. The Old Covenant rules the fleshly sons, who must fulfill their vow of obedience in the attempt to be saved by the power of their flesh. The New Covenant rules the spiritual sons, and God has made His own vow to change their hearts and turn them into true Israelites by the power of His will.

Chapter 5: The Scarlet Beast

The woman pictured in Revelation 17 is different from the beast that she rides, though obviously they are closely connected. The woman is “*the great city which reigns over the kings of the earth*” ([Rev. 17:18](#)); the beast itself is a collection of kings (kingdoms) over which the woman-city reigns. The beast is thus portrayed as a creature “*having seven heads and ten horns*” ([Rev. 17:3](#)).

[Revelation 17:7](#), [8](#) says,

⁷ And the angel said to me, “Why do you wonder? I shall tell you the mystery [secret] of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns. ⁸ The beast that you saw was and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss and go to destruction. And those who dwell on the earth will wonder, whose name has not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast, that he was and is not and will come.”

John’s Misplaced Admiration

The angel saw that John was awestruck by the woman and asked, “*why do you wonder?*” The Greek word is *thaumazo*, which means to admire, marvel, or wonder. If the apostle himself could be amazed by the woman, how much more the kings of the earth, who have had no angel to warn them? So [Rev. 17:8](#) tells us, “*those who dwell on the earth will wonder*” (*thaumazo*).

The word *thaumazo* is used also in [2 Thess. 1:10](#),

¹⁰ when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day and to be marveled at [*thaumazo*] among all who have believed ...

In other words, some day when Christ comes to be glorified in His saints, the rest of the people will marvel at them with admiration of the awesome glory of God. It appears that John, however, was admiring the woman with her counterfeit glory, and the angel then took him to task about this. Instead of John admiring the woman, she will one day admire the glorified saints, for the glory of God is far greater than the glory of the woman riding the scarlet beast.

Who is the Beast?

As for the beast itself, the angel links it to the beast from the sea in [Rev. 13:1](#),

¹ ... And I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, on his horns were ten diadems, and on his heads were blasphemous names.

The woman, then, rides the religious beast of Revelation 13, who is also the little horn of [Dan. 7:8](#). Here is where it becomes important to understand the book of Daniel before studying the book of Revelation. Daniel was the first to receive revelation about the little horn. What he saw was complex, but his revelation was not nearly as detailed as John’s revelation.

Most Bible teachers tend to get lost in these details, because they do not know history, and even if they did, many of them are Futurists. Hence, they can only speculate about future things, not knowing that much of the prophecy has already been fulfilled. This only adds to the confusion and usually makes it virtually impossible to understand the prophecy about this scarlet beast.

The first step toward understanding is to see that the great harlot is riding the same beast from the sea presented to us in Revelation 13. The beast comes up from the sea in [Rev. 13:1](#), but [Rev. 17:8](#) says the beast comes up from the “abyss,” a word that means the deep sea.

In both chapters the beast has seven heads and ten horns. In both chapters the beast wages war against the saints. (Compare [Rev. 13:7](#) with 17:14.) These are the chief characteristics of the little horn in [Dan. 7:21](#).

Finally, the end of [Rev. 17:8](#) says that “*those who dwell on the earth will wonder [thaumazo]... when they see the beast, that he was and is not and will come.*” This is similar to John’s earlier description of the beast from the sea in [Rev. 13:3](#),

³ And I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed. And the whole earth was amazed [thaumazo] and followed after the beast.

The amazement, or “wonder,” is on account of the beast being “slain” by a “fatal wound” and yet healed. At the end of [Rev. 17:8](#), John describes the same beast, saying, “*he was and is not and will come*.” It is plain that we are to interpret this in terms of the event described earlier in [Rev. 13:3](#). It occurred when the pope was taken captive in 1798, the papacy receiving a fatal head wound, only for the church institution to be revived and “healed” in 1804 when Napoleon felt he needed a pope to crown him as emperor.

This is complex, because the full picture is seen only by collecting all the data from these three chapters, one in Daniel and two in the book of Revelation. Scripture gives us a progressive revelation, rather than organizing all the details into a single passage. This is inconvenient for us as readers, but it is what we have been given.

The Angelic Interpretation

[Revelation 17:9](#) says,

⁹ Here is the mind which has wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits.

Mountains are both literal and spiritual, for we know that Rome sits on seven literal hills, and yet mountains also represent kings or kingdoms. The seven literal hills of Rome are called:

1. Viminalis
2. Capitolinus
3. Aventinus
4. Caelius
5. Palatinus
6. Quirinalis
7. Esquilinus

These seven hills spiritually represent seven forms of government in the history of Rome:

1. Kings
2. Consuls
3. Dictators
4. Decemvirs

5. Military Tribunes

6. Military Emperors

7. Christian Emperors

These forms of government are the most important, of course, since the physical hills only serve as signs to help us locate the city of Rome and prophesy of more important things.

The angel continues his explanation in [Rev. 17:10](#),

¹⁰ and they [i.e., the seven mountains] are seven kings; five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain a little while. ¹¹ And the beast which was and is not, is himself also an eighth, and is one of the seven, and he goes to destruction.

The angel says that “*five have fallen.*” Keep in mind that this was spoken in the first century. In that context, the first five forms of Roman government had already fallen and had been replaced by the sixth—the military emperors—after the death of Nero in 68 A.D.

After Nero committed suicide in 68 A.D., there was a power struggle as various Roman military generals attempted to take the throne. First was Galba (June of 68 to January of 69). Then Otho, reigned from January to April of 69. Vitellius succeeded Otho and reigned from April of 69 to December of 69.

Finally, Vespasian’s troops (who were in Judea suppressing the Jewish Revolt) proclaimed their general to be the emperor of Rome. Vespasian then left the troops under the command of his son, Titus, while he went to Rome to secure the throne. Once he secured the throne, he sent word to Titus to continue the war in Judea. Titus then surrounded Jerusalem at Passover in April of 70 A.D., and the city was destroyed a few months later.

This was how Rome came to be ruled by military emperors. This was the sixth type of government in Roman history, and it was the type of government that existed when the angel interpreted the seven mountains to John at Patmos around 96 A.D.

The seventh form (Christian emperors) “*has not yet come,*” because this began with Constantine, who took Rome in 310 A.D. Of this seventh form of government, the angel says, “*when he comes, he must remain a little while.*” The time is non-specific, and since God speaks from a timeless perspective, “a little while” *to Him* can be a very long time *to us*. We see this in [Rev. 22:20](#), where Jesus tells John, “*I am coming quickly.*”

Well, it has been more than 1900 years since He said that to John in 96 A.D. Our mortality gives us a shorter time frame for “*quickly*” than how God sees it from His frame of reference.

So the Christian emperors in the East and the popes in the West—all religious leaders in their own way—were to continue for “*a little while.*” How long? It is vague, but the time seems to end with the “fatal wound” of the beast. At that point, there is a shift in prophetic history, as the seventh beast becomes also *the eighth* ([Rev. 17:11](#)).

The angel makes it clear that the eighth is “*one of the seven,*” so this is like Part Two of a previous “king.” Which king? It can only be the seventh which was healed of the fatal wound, for in coming back to life, the seventh became also the eighth.

Chapter 6: From Persecutor to Betrayer

The scarlet beast in Revelation 13 was a persecutor, but in [Rev. 17:11](#) the angel adds that he “*goes to destruction*.” There is more to this than just the beast being destroyed in the end. In fact, there are enormous prophetic implications to this statement. Whereas he spends most of his career persecuting the saints, toward the end he becomes a *son of perdition*.

The Greek word translated “destruction” is *apoleia*, which the KJV translates “perdition.” The root word *apollumi* means “perish, destroy, lose.”

Apoleia is also the word used in verse 8, where the beast is said to “*come up out of the abyss [the deep sea] and to go to destruction*” or “perdition.”

This is the same terminology that Jesus used to describe Judas, who betrayed Him. [John 17:12](#) says,

12 While I was with them, I was keeping them in Thy name which thou hast given Me; and I guarded them, and not one of them perished [*apoleia*, “was lost” KJV] but the son of perdition [*apoleia*], that the Scriptures might be fulfilled.

In my opinion, the King James Version is more accurate in rendering it “lost” rather than “perished.” When Jesus prayed this prayer, Judas had not yet hanged himself, but he had already been “lost.” That is, he had gone out from the Last Supper to make a deal with the chief priests. Hence, the phrase, “*son of perdition*,” is a specific term reserved for the prophetic role that is played by the betrayers. We could also apply it retroactively to Ahithophel, though Jesus applied it specifically to Judas. Paul later applied the term to an end-time betrayer, as we will see shortly.

The Usurpers and the Betrayers

If you recall, Judas fulfilled the prophetic role of Ahithophel, who betrayed King David when Absalom usurped his throne. Judas was Jesus’ “friend” ([Matt. 26:50](#)) when he betrayed Him, even as Ahithophel had been David’s “friend” ([Psalm 41:9](#)).

This entire story of betrayal, in which the throne was usurped out from under its rightful king, has a third prophetic fulfillment in connection to the second work of Christ. For this reason, Paul spoke of the coming “*son of perdition*” ([2 Thess. 2:3](#)), who will be exposed in “*the day of the Lord*.”

To really understand this prophecy, one must have a thorough knowledge of the original story of David and Absalom and the role of Ahithophel. One must then know how it was fulfilled in Christ’s first appearance, where David’s role was played by Jesus, Absalom’s role was played by the chief priests, and Ahithophel’s role was played by Judas.

Armed with that knowledge, we can then see how the story has been playing out for the third time. The second coming of Christ is a Joseph manifestation, and the conflict this time is over the birthright. Hence, the conflict has taken a different form with new usurpers and betrayers. The usurpers are those who actively and knowingly oppose Christ’s claim to the throne and the birthright. The betrayers are once again Jesus’ *friends* who support the usurper’s attempt to steal the birthright.

The betrayers, then, are Christian believers. The usurpers of the birthright are the same as those who usurped the throne of David in the first coming of Christ. Having usurped the throne, Paul says in [2 Thess. 2:4](#), “*he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God*.” In other words, by refusing Christ His rightful claim to the throne, they usurped the throne.

As for the betrayers, no longer is there a single betrayer, because the “*son of perdition*” is now an entire group of people who help the usurpers. They are called Christian Zionists, whose main goal is to help the Jews steal the

birthright and the birthright name, *Israel*. Both of these were given to the sons of Joseph (not Judah) in [Gen. 48:16](#), when Jacob laid hands on Ephraim and Manasseh, saying,

¹⁶ The angel who has redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and may my name live on in them ...

He was referring to the angel Peniel whom he had wrestled in [Gen. 32:24](#). The angel had given him the name “Israel” in [Gen. 32:28](#). This was the name that Jacob-Israel passed down to the sons of Joseph—or Ephraim in particular. So many centuries later, when the kingdom was divided, the northern tribes claimed the name *Israel*, while the southern tribes had to settle for the name *Judah*. After this division, Israel held the birthright, while Judah held the scepter.

Still later, when Israel was taken to Assyria, the birthright appeared to be lost, along with the so-called “lost tribes of Israel.” More than a century after this, the southern House of Judah went into a 70-year captivity to Babylon, and then returned in order that Jesus might be born in Bethlehem of Judah, as [Micah 5:2](#) had prophesied.

When Jesus came to Judah in His first appearance, He came to claim the scepter and throne of His father David. But in His second appearance, He comes to claim the birthright of Joseph and to take back the name *Israel* from those who usurped the name for themselves in 1948. Once again, the usurpers have received support from modern Ahithophels and Judases, most of them not knowing what they have done. If they could understand the story of David and Absalom and see how it played out in the New Testament, they might have avoided playing the role of the betrayer in the second work of Christ.

The Christian Beast Goes to Perdition

When the angel in [Rev. 17:11](#) says that the scarlet beast “goes to destruction” (*apoleia*), he was giving us a major clue as to the identity of the beast as well as his destiny. In essence, the angel is telling us that the beast from the sea—the religious beast—is the disciple and “friend” of Jesus who ends up betraying Him at the end of the age. This religious beast, then, is a Christian beast, even as Judas had been a Christian.

Judas probably did not betray Jesus maliciously. It is understood by most theologians that he tried to put Jesus into a situation where He would be forced to do a miracle to save His own life. If witnessed by a large crowd, such a miracle might have propelled Him to the throne, making it clear to all that He was the Messiah. Judas’ heart was not right, and he ended up betraying Jesus, but nonetheless, he was still Jesus’ “friend.” In fact, enemies may kill you, only friends can betray you. Such betrayal is part of the drama in the divine plan.

The angelic statement, then, that the scarlet beast “*goes to destruction*” can be understood as an end-time prophecy. Obviously, “destruction” happens at the end of the story. So it requires no stretch of imagination to look for the fulfillment of this in our time at the end of the age. In fact, the entire drama has played out in the past century.

Those who usurped the throne at Christ’s first appearance in the first century were not content with the throne, but desired also the birthright of Joseph and the name *Israel*, which was the mark of the birthright. Many Jews may trace their ancestry back to the nation of Judah (which included Benjamin and Levi), and, in fact, “Jew” is but a shortened form of *Judah*. However, the Israelites were never called Jews. The ten tribes were never Jews in a biblical sense, nor was Judah ever given the birthright. We read in [1 Chron. 5:1](#), [2](#),

¹ Now the sons of Reuben the first-born of Israel (for he was the first-born, but because he defiled his father’s bed, his birthright was given to the sons of Joseph the son of Israel; so that he is not enrolled in the genealogy according to the birthright. ² Though Judah prevailed over his brothers, and from him came the leader, yet the birthright belonged to Joseph).

As we have already seen, when Jacob-Israel passed the birthright down to the sons of Joseph, he also gave them the name which the angel had given him—*Israel*. The name is the mark of those who inherit the birthright. Christ Himself, in His second coming, is described as One having His robe dipped in blood ([Rev. 19:13](#)). This is the mark of Joseph ([Gen. 37:31](#)), whose robe was dipped in blood.

Most Christians confuse the Jews with the Israelites, and this causes them to believe that the Jews are Israel and that the Jews are the inheritors of the birthright, having the right to call their nation *Israel*. They assume that the state of Israel is the fulfillment of the prophecies given to the House of Israel, not realizing that the House of Israel was not the Jewish nation. They do not understand the distinct callings that Israel and Judah had been given, any more than they understand the story of Absalom and David and Ahithophel.

For this reason, many Christians have been seduced to support the nation which took the name *Israel*, and this has placed them in the collective body that is today playing the role of Judas. Even as Judas betrayed Jesus in supporting the Jewish leaders' desire to usurp the throne of David, so also the modern Judas is betraying Jesus in supporting the Jewish leaders' desire to usurp the birthright of Joseph and the name *Israel*.

There is yet time to repent, of course, for we have all betrayed Christ in various ways, usually without realizing it. We should also make it clear that betraying Christ does not mean that someone loses their salvation. Judas was a believer, but he lost his position as a disciple ([Acts 1:20](#)) and, I believe, as an overcomer. It is unfortunate that so many Christians believe that Judas lost his ultimate salvation, because such a view makes it inconceivable that so many sincere Christians today might be playing the role of Judas. Not knowing the difference between a believer (Jacob) and an overcomer (Israel) handicaps many Christians in their understanding of the divine plan.

True Israelites are Overcomers

Israel was a nation dominated by a particular genealogy descended from the twelve sons of Jacob-Israel. However, there were foreigners who became Israelites as well. They were Israelites by nationality, and they were mentioned many times in Scripture. Hence, the Bible never talks about an Israel *race*; it is always the “*nation*” of Israel. For example, in [Judges 2:20](#) God condemns Israel, saying, “*Because this nation has transgressed My covenant...*” The whole nation had transgressed the covenant, not just the genealogical Israelites within the nation.

Jacob was not born an Israelite. He was given that name later. Israel, then, is a prophetic name, not a racial name. It speaks of one's character and of a mature relationship with God, which even Jacob did not have until he wrestled with the angel. To be an Israelite, then, required more than just a genealogical connection with Abraham and Isaac. So also the apostle Paul tells us in [Rom. 11:3–7](#) that those who are “chosen” or “elect” are limited to the remnant of grace—not the entire nation. In Elijah's day there were only 7,000 “chosen people.”

Those who are not of the remnant of grace desire to usurp the name Israel for themselves, claiming to be chosen, but basing their claim on the flesh in one way or another. Those Christians who testify on their behalf that they are indeed the true Israelites, chosen of God, are betraying Jesus Christ Himself, usually without realizing it.

In the end, the religious beast as a corporate entity betrays Jesus and thus “*goes to destruction.*” The judgment of this beast, that is, the little horn of [Dan. 7:20](#), signals the time when the kingdom is given to “*the saints*” of the Most High God ([Dan. 7:22](#)). This is the point in time where the true Israelites, those called to rule the earth as part of the Joseph company, are given the birthright as children of Joseph.

Chapter 7: The Eighth Beast

The scarlet beast in Revelation 17 was seen with seven heads and ten horns. The seven heads, according to the angel, are seven “kings” (or kingdoms, dominions), represented by “seven mountains.” These kings are really seven forms or manifestations of the beast, and for this reason they themselves are called beasts. [Rev. 17:11](#) says,

¹¹ And the beast which was and is not, is himself also an eighth, and is one of the seven, and he goes to destruction.

To reiterate, the scarlet “beast” is not only a single entity, it is also “*an eighth and is one of the seven.*” There are really only seven *distinct* beasts, as the angel told John in the previous verse, so how can one beast be two—that is, how can there be *eight* beasts?

The seventh is a double beast, that is, a beast that comes in two stages. Stage one primarily manifests as a *persecutor* in his war against the saints. In the second stage, the beast seems to morph into a *betrayor*, even as Judas the son of perdition. Hence, he “*goes to destruction*” (or “perdition”).

Daniel did not see this second stage, for his “little horn” waged war only against the saints for “*a time, times, and half a time*” (i.e., 1,260 years) until the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom ([Dan. 7:21, 22](#)). But this time frame brings us only to the French Revolution, which was 1,260 years after Justinian changed times and laws in 529–534 A.D. Obviously, the French Revolution in 1789–1794 did not bestow the Dominion Mandate to the saints of the Most High.

John saw beyond Daniel’s revelation, for it was revealed to him in Revelation 13 that this little horn would receive a fatal wound after its 1,260-year dominion. It would then revive and come into an alliance with the financial beast from the earth. Daniel saw none of this, nor, in fact, did he even see the seven heads on this beast. He saw only the ten horns on this beast, which we will explain later. So John’s revelation fills in historical details after the French Revolution that Daniel had not seen earlier. John builds upon Daniel’s revelation.

Essentially, the seventh “head” of the beast was Daniel’s little horn. It was the church beast, the “Christian” Roman Empire, which made war against the saints (overcomers) for 1,260 years until it received its fatal head wound. The French Revolution marked the beginning of the end of the Inquisitions, for after this, Rome had almost no power to continue its war against dissenters, Protestants, and saints.

What the Law Recognizes

With the healing of its fatal wound, the seventh “head” (or “beast”) rose from the dead and became the eighth “head” of [Rev. 17:11](#). It is a principle of law that when one dies and is raised from the dead, he is seen by the law as a “new creature.” That is how the law views all who have died in Christ and have been raised with Him. [2 Cor. 5:14–17](#) shows this:

¹⁴ For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; ¹⁵ and He died for all, that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf. ¹⁶ Therefore from now on we recognize no man according to the flesh, even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer. ¹⁷ Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come.

In other words, we no longer “recognize” Christ as He was prior to His resurrection. We relate to Him in His post-resurrection state. This is a *legal* recognition that He is not the same Person that He was while He walked the earth. Legally speaking, He is a New Creation. *Legally speaking*, Jesus died and Jesus Christ is a new creation. So also are

we new creations, if indeed we identify with the new embryos that have been begotten in us as “*Christ in you, the hope of glory*” ([Col. 1:27](#)).

By understanding how the law views death and resurrection, we not only understand how the law views us, but also how the law views the beast that received the fatal wound and then lived again. It is the same law with very different applications. The little horn, which persecuted the saints for so many centuries, has been (as it were) *reborn as another creature*. Hence, the seventh has become the eighth from a legal standpoint, but from a historical perspective, they are the same beast, separated only by the fatal head wound.

So it might also be said that although we are new creatures in Christ, we appear to be the same person as we always were. This change of identity works for us in a positive way, taking us out from the law of sin and death into the law of resurrection life ([Rom. 8:2](#)), but the same law has a negative effect upon the seventh beast who has become the eighth. The beast does not die *in Christ*, even though it is a “Christian” beast by religion. Instead, it morphs from persecutor to betrayer, or from a beast that *eats* people to one that *betrays* Christ according to the pattern of Judas.

The Rise of Zionism

The rise of the House of Rothschild in the late 1700’s, and especially after the Napoleonic Wars, brought certain Jewish expectations upon the family that were at first quite unwelcome. The Rothschilds certainly desired to use their new wealth and rising influence to raise the status of Jews wherever they could. But their main focus in the 1800’s was to do so *in Europe*.

Niall Ferguson, the Rothschild biographer, tells us,

“The central dilemma which confronted the Rothschilds lay here: because of their wealth, other Jews looked to them for leadership in their pursuit of equal civil and political rights. As we shall see, this leadership was forthcoming from a remarkably early stage, beginning with Mayer Amschel’s efforts to achieve civil rights for the Frankfurt Jews in the era of the Napoleonic Wars, and continuing with his grandson Lionel’s campaign to secure the admission of Jews to the House of Commons in the 1840s and 1850s. It was a strategy which suited the Rothschilds well, allowing them to pursue their own familial strategy of penetrating the social and political elites where they lived without converting from Judaism; and allowing them to do good works on behalf of their ‘co-religionists’ while at the same time acquiring quasi-royal status in the eyes of other Jews” ([The House of Rothschild](#), Vol. 1, p. 22).

The Rothschild strategy was to break down the barriers that excluded Jews from high social and political status. The strategy was to obtain the right to assimilate into European society without converting to Christianity. But at the same time other Jews arose who lacked the patience required for such a strategy and who believed that Jews needed their own country where they could enjoy full citizenship rights comparable to other nations. Ferguson continues,

“At the same time, when other Jews, despairing of assimilation as an objective, began to press for some kind of return to the Holy Land, the Rothschilds’ position was further compromised; for they themselves had no desire to forsake their palatial town and country residences for barren Palestine.” (p. 22)

Their enemies saw the Jewish refusal to convert to a new religion as evidence of their refusal to be part of the European nation in which they lived—that is, a refusal to assimilate. The religious requirement to convert to Christianity had been a barrier to assimilation, and because most Jews heretofore had refused to join the church, they were seen as refusing to *assimilate*, more than refusing to *convert*. Hence, critics did more to create Zionism than the Jews themselves did.

“Hostile cartoons from the 1840s and 1890s depicted the Rothschilds in a throng of Jews leaving Germany for the Holy Land—travelling first class, but leaving nonetheless. Commenting on Lionel’s campaign for admission to the House of Commons, Thomas Carlyle asked: ‘[H]ow can a real Jew, by possibility, try to be

a Senator, or even a Citizen of any country, except his own wretched Palestine, whither all his thoughts and steps and efforts tend?’”

“This was broadly the argument (though not the language) of the early Zionists like Theodor Herzl, who came to believe that the only ‘solution to the Jewish question’ was indeed for the Jews to leave Europe and found their own Judenstaat. Herzl made a succession of attempts to win the support of the Rothschilds in the belief that they were about to ‘liquidate’ their vast capital as a response to anti-Semitic attacks. But his sixty-six-page address ‘to the Rothschild Family Council’ was never sent, as he concluded from an initial rebuff that they were ‘vulgar, contemptuous, egotistical people.’ The Rothschilds, he later declared, were ‘a national misfortune for the Jews’; he even threatened to ‘liquidate’ them or to ‘wage a barbaric campaign’ against them if they opposed him.” (p. 22)

As early as 1836 Jews were proposing that the Rothschilds use their wealth to purchase Palestine for a Jewish state.

“The early French socialist Charles Fourier was another who thought that ‘The restoration of the Hebrews would be a splendid coronation for the gentleman of the House of Rothschild; like Esra and Serubabel, they can lead the Hebrews back to Jerusalem and erect once again the throne of David and Solomon, in order to call into being a Rothschild dynasty Indeed, it is possible to see such remarks as expressions of Christian millenarian hopes, with the Rothschilds supposedly hastening the Second Coming. But there is no evidence that the Rothschilds harboured any such intentions; the involvement of individual members of the family in what became known as Zionism was a much later development.” (Ferguson, p. 398)

It appears, then, that the Rothschild strategy was first to rise to positions of power within the European political and social structure. It is difficult to know if their plan envisioned an eventual state in Palestine, due to their secrecy. It was their usual policy to burn all letters written by a Rothschild after his death. Ferguson himself laments the lack of surviving letters, saying,

“More seriously, nearly all the copies of the outgoing letters from the London partners (in so far as these were made at all) were destroyed at the orders of successive partners. All that survive are eight tantalizing boxes covering the period 1906–14. We therefore have precious few letters by Nathan [Rothschild] compared with the thousands from his brothers which have survived; only a frustratingly small number from his eldest son Lionel; and next to nothing from his grandsons for the period before 1906. It should also be said that relatively few non-business letters by the partners were preserved; indeed, the first Lord Rothschild [Mayer Amschel] insisted that all his private correspondence be burnt after his death... (p. 28)

It is clear, then, that the Rothschilds did not want the public to learn of their inner workings. They may have had a long-term Zionist strategy that they did not want others to know. Perhaps they thought that if their enemies learned of this long-term Zionist strategy, it would be used as proof that they could not assimilate and should be excluded from European society.

Whatever the case, it is clear that the 1800’s saw a slow but steady emancipation of Jews, largely through the efforts of the Rothschild family. This coincided with the rise of the eighth (church) beast. At the same time, aspirations of Zionism arose among those who were impatient or who did not believe that real emancipation was possible. It may be that the Rothschilds themselves were ultimately pushed into taking a greater role in the Zionist movement by the early 1900’s.

At any rate, when the British government finally took Palestine from the Ottoman Empire in 1917, British Foreign Secretary Lord Balfour wrote to Walter Rothschild the letter known as the Balfour Declaration (Nov. 2, 1917). In part, it read:

“His Majesty’s Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly

understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.”

At the time, Walter Rothschild was the head of the British Zionist Federation. The letter was a statement of intent to establish a Jewish Homeland in Palestine (not a Jewish *state*). So it is clear that by 1917 the Rothschilds had acquired a leadership role in the Zionist movement, whether they really wanted it or not.

Thirty years later the United Nations debated the Palestinian Resolution from Nov. 21–29, 1947 and then passed the Resolution for a Jewish Homeland, effective May 14, 1948. Not content with this, when the time came, the Jewish leaders in Palestine declared a Jewish *state*, which went beyond the UN mandate, and this sparked the first Arab-Israeli conflict. To learn how this conflict developed during the first half of the 1900’s, as well as the roots of this conflict in the book of Genesis, see my book, [The Struggle for the Birthright](#).

The Bible prophesies of the return of the Jews to Palestine, but Zionists (including Christian Zionists) do not really understand what the prophets teach about this. This is mostly due to Christian ignorance of the distinction between Israel and Judah and the callings that each nation had been given by Jacob in Genesis 48 and 49.

Likewise, Christian Zionists overlook or deny outright Jesus’ prophetic pronouncements in the New Testament, where He tells us God’s real purpose for the Jews’ return. He brought them back, not for their good, but to judge them at the scene of the crime when they rejected and crucified the Messiah ([Luke 19:27, 28](#)). In other words, the fact that Scripture prophesied a Jewish return to Palestine should not be taken as divine approval or that the Zionists had a right to mistreat or expel Palestinians from their homes and farms.

Christian Zionists, who think they are blessing the Jews by paying their way to move to “Israel,” are actually sending them to almost certain destruction. Over and beyond this, they are supporting those who, in times past, usurped the throne of David and who now usurp the birthright of Joseph. This is the Judas factor that afflicts those who do not understand the scriptures or the prophecy of the eighth beast of [Rev. 17:11](#).

Chapter 8: The Ten Horns

[Revelation 17:12, 13](#) says,

¹² And the ten horns which you saw are ten kings, who have not yet received a kingdom, but they receive authority as kings with the beast for one hour. ¹³ These have one purpose and they give their power and authority to the beast for one hour.

If we tried to paint a picture of a beast with seven heads and ten horns, we would be faced with a big problem. How does one fit ten horns on just seven heads? It is obviously symbolic, and the angel explains to John that the horns, like the seven heads are “kings.” Yet when John received this revelation (96 A.D.) these kings or kingdoms had not yet arisen. So this was a future event.

In this case there were ten nations or ethnic groups in Europe that did not as yet have kingdoms of their own, because they were under the control of the Roman Empire. They were:

1. Bavarians
2. Franks
3. Bergundians
4. Alemanni
5. Suevi
6. Visigoths
7. Alans
8. Vandals
9. Ostrogoths
10. Heruli (who merged with the Longobards, or Lombards, “long beards”)

These ten nations may be connected to the “toes” on the feet of the image in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, which are mentioned in [Dan. 2:41,42](#). However, Daniel gives no details about the toes, other than that they were on the “feet” of the fourth beast. Whereas the “legs” were of iron (Roman Empire), the feet and toes were “*partly of iron and partly of pottery*” (or “*clay*,” KJV). [Dan. 2:42](#) explains the significance of this mixture, saying, “*some of the kingdom will be strong and part of it will be brittle.*”

Lacking the strength of pure iron, these ten toes were not as strong as Rome. Yet being on the feet of the image, they were to rise after the fall of the Iron Kingdom in 476 A.D. Obviously, as Rome collapsed, the ten toes became relatively stronger than Rome. Yet the prophet gives us no further details until [Dan. 7:7](#), when he reveals how the fourth beast with “*large iron teeth... had ten horns.*”

[Dan. 7:8](#) says that while the prophet contemplated the meaning of the iron beast, “*another horn, a little one, came up among them, and three of the first horns were pulled out by the roots.*” This little horn we have identified as Papal Rome, which arose as Imperial Rome crumbled. In Book 2 of my commentary on [Daniel, Prophet of the Ages, chapter 2](#), I showed how the three horns uprooted by the little horn were the Heruli, (in 493 A.D.), the Vandals (in 533), and the Ostrogoths (in 553). These are the last three on our kingdom list (p. 39). Their histories, written by Orthodox Christians in Rome, call them *barbarians*, because they were Arian Christians, not Orthodox.

The ten horns of [Dan. 7:7](#) are also the ten horns of [Rev. 17:12](#), but John writes nothing of the little horn’s conquest and uprooting of three of those horns. The angel tells John in [Rev. 17:13](#) that “*they give their power and authority to the beast.*” The beast, of course, is the little horn of Daniel 7, so by linking these two sets of prophecies, we see that three of the “horns” did not *willingly* give their power to the beast, but were subjected violently by war.

The ten horns formed ten independent kingdoms for a short season (“one hour”) after the fall of Rome in 476 A.D., after which time these horns began to be uprooted, beginning in 493.

War Against the Lamb

[Revelation 17:14](#) continues,

¹⁴ These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him are the called and chosen and faithful.

Here again we see the theme of the little horn's war on the saints, first prophesied in [Dan. 7:21](#), then by John in [Rev. 13:7](#), and now again in [Rev. 17:14](#), where it is described as a "*war against the Lamb*." The little horn's war is ultimately directed against Jesus Christ Himself, but because He is out of reach (in heaven), the war is directed against His body on earth—that is, the *arnion*, the little lambs, or the saints.

Jesus takes this persecution personally, of course, for to persecute them is to persecute Jesus Himself. This principle is revealed in [Acts 9:4](#) when Jesus first appeared to Saul on the Damascus Road, asking him, "*Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting ME?*" When Saul inquired as to who He was, Jesus answered in [Acts 9:5](#), "*I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.*"

So we see this principle again in [Rev. 17:14](#), where the "*war against the Lamb*" is a war against Jesus Himself but is fought on earth against "*the saints*" ([Dan. 7:21](#)). John's term *arnion* is the body of Christ, those who follow the leading of their Head. The little horn, on the other hand, demands that the body of Christ consider the popes to be their head.

The Lamb is destined to "*overcome them*," that is, to overcome the ten horns being directed by the little horn beast. How can we be sure? Because Christ is "*Lord of lords and King of kings*." As the rightful Heir of the world, He cannot lose, even though the war seems to go badly for the saints during the time allotted to the little horn. The little horn was destined to overcome the saints UNTIL the time came for them to possess the Kingdom.

It is interesting, then, that John assures us that Christ's victory over the beast is not accomplished all by Himself, though certainly He is the reason for success. The angel tells John that the Lamb will win, along with "*those who are with Him*." Daniel calls them "*the saints of the Most High*," but the angel in [Rev. 17:14](#) says they "*are the called* [*kletos*, "called, invited"] *and chosen* [*eklektos*, "elect, chosen"] *and faithful* [*pistis*, "trustworthy, faithful]."

The body of Christ are first *called*, or invited (as to a banquet), then *chosen* as God's "elect," and finally they are found to be *faithful* when tested by the persecution of the little horn. To be one of God's chosen people involves all three of these elements. Notably lacking in this list is their race or genealogy. Thus, the angel supports Paul's statement in [Rom. 11:7](#), where we see that not all Israelites are "chosen," but only the remnant of grace that had remained faithful to God in Jezebel's persecution. The term "God's chosen people" did not apply to unbelieving Jews, nor, in the case of the little horn, does the term apply later to the church beast that persecutes the saints.

The Waters

[Revelation 17:15](#) says,

¹⁵ And he said to me, "The waters which you saw where the harlot sits are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues."

This is a reference to an earlier passage in [Rev. 17:1](#), which speaks of "*the great harlot who sits on many waters*." It is a picture of the counterfeit bride holding dominion over many people and nations.

The End of the Harlot

[Revelation 17:16](#) then takes us to the end of the age,

¹⁶ And the ten horns which you saw, and the beast, these will hate the harlot and will make her desolate and naked, and will eat her flesh and will burn her up with fire. ¹⁷ For God has put it in their hearts to execute His purpose by having a common purpose, and by giving their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God should be fulfilled.

The ten horns are united as a single beast on which the harlot rides (or rules), but in the end God causes the beast(s) to turn on the harlot and to “eat her flesh.” This was done to fulfill the prophetic story of Jezebel, who was eaten by her own dogs. Elijah prophesied this in [2 Kings 9:10](#),

¹⁰ And the dogs shall eat Jezebel in the territory of Jezreel, and none shall bury her.

When this prophecy was fulfilled, Jehu, who had been anointed king, found Jezebel in [2 Kings 9:32–36](#),

³² Then he lifted up his face to the window and said, “Who is on my side? Who?” And two or three officials [“eunuchs”] looked down at him. ³³ And he said, “Throw her down.” So they threw her down, and some of her blood was sprinkled on the wall and on the horses, and he trampled her under foot. ³⁴ When he came in, he ate and drank; and he said, “See now to this cursed woman and bury her, for she is a king’s daughter.” ³⁵ And they went to bury her, but they found no more of her than the skull and the feet and the palms of her hands. ³⁶ Therefore they returned and told him. And he said, “This is the word of the Lord, which He spoke by His servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, ‘In the property of Jezreel the dogs shall eat the flesh of Jezebel’.”

The “dogs” in this prophecy are the equivalent of the ten horns which form the beast on which the great harlot rides. When the time of the harlot’s persecution ends, the saints obtain victory over her. The divine court makes a decree giving the dominion to the saints of the Most High. Then God puts it into the heart of the “dogs” to turn against the harlot and to “eat” her.

To eat or devour is a Hebrew metaphor for conquering. We see this when the ten spies gave an evil report in [Num. 13:32](#), saying, “*The land... devours its inhabitants.*” But Joshua responded in [Num. 14:9 KJV](#), “*they are bread for us.*” The question was who would eat who? That is, who would conquer and consume who?

So the angel makes it clear that the “dogs” (or nations) that had been seduced by the great harlot would be the ones who would destroy her and devour her. Ahab and Jezebel had usurped the vineyard of Naboth in Jezreel, which was a type of the Kingdom, and so they were both killed in Jezreel. Jezreel means “God scatters.” When applied to Israel, it meant scattering seed in order to sow her in the earth ([Hosea 2:23](#)), but when applied to Jezebel, it referred to the scattering of her bones as each dog fought for its share.

This grisly scene, of course, is purely symbolic when it comes to the actual fulfillment of prophecy in our time. The point is that the harlot system will be destroyed by the nations and the people who have been oppressed by her domination. The saints will not have to fight this battle except in spiritual warfare. God will use blind unbelievers to execute justice on the persecutor.

The angelic explanation ends in [Rev. 17:18](#), saying,

¹⁸ And the woman whom you saw is the great city, which reigns over the kings of the earth.

The implication is that “*the kings of the earth*” are also the “dogs” who turn on Jezebel and “eat” her flesh. The city has already been identified earlier as “Babylon,” and [Rev. 16:12](#) implies that the kings from the east are the nations whom God has raised up to overthrow the yoke of Babylon-Jezebel. The saints of the Most High are then given the Dominion Mandate, though the angel does not tell us precisely how this happens.

The main pattern that we have is from [Dan. 6:1–3](#), where Darius the Mede makes Daniel the head of state when he reorganizes the kingdom into 120 provinces (“satraps”). That pictures the saints of the Most High being given authority in the Kingdom that is to come.

The seventh bowl of wine poured out upon Babylon toward the end of Revelation 16 prophesies the fall of the city in terms of earthquakes and hail. The overthrow of the harlot at the end of Revelation 17 draws from the prophetic story of Jezebel. These accounts do not contradict each other, but rather they give supplementary details. Hence, in some way the divine “hail” of truth upon Babylon in [Rev. 16:21](#) suggests that the ten horns of the red beast will turn against the harlot when they learn the truth about her.

It is also important to note that the saints are not the ones who eat the flesh of the harlot, but the beasts that she has ruled. God uses the nations to bring about His purpose and to execute the judgment decreed by the saints of the Most High. Hence, when we observe international events today, we ought not to condemn the nations for overthrowing the harlot. The nations may be *beastly*, but in the end, they are agents of divine judgment.

This brings Revelation 17 to an end, with its description of the harlot city and its fall.

Chapter 9: The Angel of Faith's Righteousness

We come now to Revelation 18, which correlates with the 18th Hebrew letter *tsaddik*, a fish hook, which represents something inescapable, a desire, something that pulls or tugs. It is seen most obviously in the name *Zadok*, which means “righteous, just, to be in the right.” It is associated with the 18th chapter of Revelation because there we see the justice of God upon Babylon, meted out according to God’s righteous standard.

[Revelation 18:1](#) says,

¹ After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illumined with his glory.

“*After these things*” refers to the time when the ten-horned beast turns against the great harlot and eats her flesh. God uses the beast to bring judgment upon her. The angel in verse 1, according to personal revelation, is the Angel of Faith’s Righteousness. This kind of righteousness contrasts with the righteousness that comes by our own works, as Paul says in [Rom. 4:4, 5](#),

⁴ Now to the one who works, his wage is not reckoned as a favor, but as what is due. ⁵ But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness.

Paul also says that “*faith comes from hearing*” ([Rom. 10:17](#)), and so the appearance of this angel implies a time when people will hear the word of Christ and thereby will be justified by faith. So in [Rom. 4:13](#) Paul says,

¹³ For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith.

It was commonly believed in Judaism that the righteous were those who were able to follow the law according to their Old Covenant vow in [Exodus 19:8](#). To do this, of course, each of the prominent rabbis had devised their own set of practices for their students, which, if followed, took up much of the day.

The average working man found it impossible to do everything to attain “righteousness,” because only the wealthy could afford to take off that much time. So the “righteous” depended on the financial support of those who had to work hard all day. The common laborers supporting them were unable to attain such righteousness.

The righteousness of faith, however, was within reach of all men, and it removed a great burden from the working class. Unfortunately, this basic tenet of Christianity was largely lost over time, as men began to interpret grace as divine intervention to help the flesh achieve righteousness through their good works. The New Covenant then became little more than an attempt to make the Old Covenant succeed with divine help.

The Angel of Faith’s Righteousness brings the truth that resolves this problem. This is the source of light in the angel that illumines the earth with his glory. His coming is the result of the prayers and decrees inherent in the seven bowls of *water* that were poured out along with the bowls of wine in Revelation 16. It is how the Kingdom is built even while Babylon falls.

The Cage of Unclean and Hateful Birds

[Revelation 18:2](#) continues,

² And he cried out with a mighty voice, saying, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! And she has become a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hateful bird.”

Here the angel pictures Babylon as “*a dwelling place of demons*,” rather than being a dwelling for the Holy Spirit. Likewise, it is a “*prison of every unclean spirit*.” The Greek word *phylake* is translated “cage” in the KJV and “a haunt” in The Emphatic Diaglott. Here in [Rev. 18:2](#) it seems to refer to a cage, or bird house, as if to say that Babylon has captured every “*unclean and hateful bird*” it could find and brought it into the city.

The demons, unclean spirits, and birds are all different ways of expressing how Babylon had been infested by every form of uncleanness that was possible. The unclean birds are listed in [Lev. 13–19](#). They are birds of prey which eat dead animals that have not been drained of blood. They represent bloodthirsty people, as, for example, the people of Mount Seir (i.e., Edomites) in [Ezekiel 35:6](#). Those who are bloodthirsty are those who do not know how to speak “*the truth in love*” ([Eph. 4:15](#)), but rather speak with hatred. Hence, Babylon is a cage for both “*unclean and hateful*” birds.

Leaving Babylon

By contrast, the angel came to bring the light of the word of God and the Holy Spirit to indwell the people of God. He brings the great end-time worldwide outpouring of the Spirit that many believe will come. The result will be a reversal of fortune for Babylon. [Jeremiah 51:44, 45](#) says,

⁴⁴ And I shall punish Bel in Babylon, and I shall make what he has swallowed come out of his mouth; and the nations will no longer stream to him. Even the wall of Babylon has fallen down! ⁴⁵ Come forth from her midst, My people, and each of you save yourselves from the fierce anger of the Lord.

Bel, the main god of Babylon, is here pictured as a monster who swallows many nations, as the prophet said earlier in [Jer. 51:34](#),

³⁴ Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon has devoured me and crushed me; he has set me down like an empty vessel; he has swallowed me like a monster; he has filled his stomach with my delicacies; he has washed me away [i.e., washed me down with a drink].

As a beast, Babylon enjoyed a long time in which to “eat” nations, but in the end, God causes Babylon to regurgitate all the nations that it had eaten. “*I shall make what he has swallowed come out of his mouth*,” God says in verse 44. This is a graphic way of telling us that God will reclaim the nations that had been assimilated by Babylon.

The Angel of Faith’s Righteousness is sent to the earth in order to give the people *something to go to*, rather than just having them *leave Babylon*. It was the same when God brought Israel out of Egypt. The purpose of leaving Egypt was to go to the Promised Land. So also is it with the command to leave Babylon and to go to the New Jerusalem. The nations must leave the darkness and go toward the light that the angel brings. Later, [Rev. 21:23, 24](#) describes the New Jerusalem,

²³ And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb. ²⁴ And the nations shall walk by its light, and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory into it.

These are the same “*nations*” and “*kings of the earth*” which had previously been swallowed up by Babylon, and which had also lived among the unclean and hateful birds. The destruction of Babylon does not mean that these nations are destroyed, but rather that they are saved, for “*the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ*” ([Rev. 11:15](#)).

These are the nations on which the angel shines the light of the word. Because no unclean thing can enter the New Jerusalem, and yet the nations come into the city, it is plain that the nations in the end will be clean and will walk by faith in Jesus Christ as the King of kings.

The Wine of Babylon

[Revelation 18:3](#) says,

³ For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the passions of her immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed acts of immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich by the wealth of her sensuality.

The harlot seduces the kings of the earth with the wine of immorality. While her wine breaks down inhibitions and moral boundaries, she promises people the right to sin, especially sexual sins. In recent history we have witnessed how the western nations stopped enforcing laws against fornication, then adultery, then homosexual relations. (It remains illegal to charge money for such sins, because that is a commercial crime until the government is able to tax it.) Now they are making ready to legalize bestiality and pedophilia. I pray that the Angel of Faith's Righteousness arrives to turn the hearts of the people before it goes that far.

Yet we should understand that God Himself has taken credit for making the earth drunk with the wine of Babylon. God has used Babylon as a judgment upon Jerusalem for her own immorality and rebellion against the laws of God. When Jerusalem and Judah held the Dominion Mandate, they had authority over the whole earth, and when they rebelled and refused to repent, their sin affected all who were under their authority. Therefore, not only Jerusalem, but all nations were forced to drink from the cup. The list is in [Jer. 25:15–26](#), which says in part,

¹⁵ For thus the Lord, the God of Israel, says to me, “Take this cup of the wine of wrath [passion] from My hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send you, to drink it. ¹⁶ And they shall drink and stagger and go mad because of the sword that I will send among them.” ¹⁷ Then I took the cup from the Lord's hand, and made all the nations drink, to whom the Lord sent me: ¹⁸ Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, and its kings and its princes... ¹⁹ Pharaoh, king of Egypt... ²⁰ and all the foreign people

When we understand the divine law and the sovereignty of God, we may understand why the nations are drunk on Babylonian wine. We should not simply blame the ungodly nations for their bad behavior, but look beyond this to the root causes of all this immorality. If we understand the cause, then we can also find the solution.

The Laws of Tribulation in Deuteronomy 28 show that when Israel violated the covenant by rebelling against God's moral laws, God judged Israel by sending them into captivity. [Deut. 28:64](#) says,

⁶⁴ Moreover, the Lord will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other end of the earth; and there you shall serve other gods, wood and stone, which you or your fathers have not known.

God did indeed scatter Israel throughout the nations, and their idolatry was both the cause of divine judgment and a continuing part of it as well. Because they had refused to come to the light of the word, the light was to be withheld from them for a long time.

But we have now come to the end of the “seven times” of judgment, and soon the Angel of Faith's Righteousness will arrive to cast out the darkness. The effect of the cup of wine is wearing off as the morning dawns. The long night of judgment is ending.

Let us make ourselves ready for the new day. Sharpen your fish hook (*tsaddik*), if you are able to hear the voice of the angel. The time has come to become fishers of men as the Spirit of God is poured out into the earth.

Chapter 10: The Releasing Captives Angel

[Revelation 18:4](#), [5](#) says,

⁴ And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, “Come out of her, my people, that you may not participate in her sins and that you may not receive of her plagues.” ⁵ For her sins have piled up as high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.

All voices from heaven come from God, but often God speaks through angels or other intermediaries. In this case, personal revelation tells me that this voice came from an angel known by the name “Releasing Captives.” He is the angel responsible to send forth the word at the proper time to leave Babylon.

The timing of this release is important. In the days of Jeremiah, the prophet told the people of Judah to submit to Nebuchadnezzar, because divine judgment had been decreed, and the people were to accept His judgment ([Jer. 27:12](#)). The law of God commanded men to submit to the decision of the judges, on pain of death ([Deut. 17:9–12](#)). Hence, those who refused to submit to Babylon, thinking that it was God’s will to fight the Babylonians to save the holy city, were called “*bad figs*” ([Jer. 24:8](#)), and they came under the curse of the law ([Jer. 24:9](#), [10](#)).

But Jeremiah also prophesied of the fall of Babylon at the end of their seventy-year sentence. In that context, the prophet told the people of Judah in [Jer. 51:6](#),

⁶ Flee from the midst of Babylon, and each of you save his life! Do not be destroyed in her punishment, for this is the Lord’s time of vengeance; He is going to render recompense to her.

Jeremiah spoke of Judah’s release from Babylon, but this word established the prophetic pattern of a much greater release in our time. Hence, the angel in [Rev. 18:4](#) quotes [Jer. 51:6](#).

Timing is everything. There was a time to go into captivity and be led by the Spirit *into Babylon*. There is also a time to be led by the Spirit *out of Babylon*. In our case, the captivity has been much longer than a mere seventy years, but we believe that 2014–2017 is the time of release. How will we know for sure? We will know when God causes Babylon to fall. Those who are alert and forewarned will need to be led by the Spirit to know specifically what to do at that time.

The Kinsman Redeemer

God’s “vengeance,” of course, is based fully on His justice, as defined by the law. One might ask why God would find fault with Babylon when He was the One who put the nations into captivity by divine decree. The answer is found in [Jer. 50:33](#), [34](#),

³³ Thus says the Lord of hosts, “The sons of Israel are oppressed, and the sons of Judah as well; and all who took them captive have held them fast; they have refused to let them go. ³⁴ Their Redeemer [*ga’al*] is strong, the Lord [Yahweh] of hosts is His name; He will vigorously plead their case, so that He may bring rest to the earth, but turmoil to the inhabitants of Babylon.”

If Babylon had released Judah willingly at the appointed time (i.e., after seventy years), no case would have been filed against her in the divine court. But Babylon had no intention of releasing Judah, so God acted as their Redeemer and brought justice upon Babylon. The same is true for us today. Babylon was required to release its captives by the feast of Tabernacles in 2014, and she had one year in which to comply. The Babylonian leaders did not comply by October of 2015, so our great Redeemer rose up to bring judgment upon Babylon.

A “redeemer” is actually a kinsman redeemer, one who is responsible to protect the legal rights of the family and to execute the verdicts rendered by the court. In [Deut. 19:6](#) and [12](#) the NASB calls him “*the avenger of blood.*” The

translators seem to know little about biblical law. The word they translate “avenger” is *ga’al*, which means “redeemer.” The word “blood” has to do with bloodline—that is, a kinsman.

By calling such a person “*the avenger of blood*,” they insert an unloving connotation to the title and thereby malign Jesus Christ Himself, who is our Kinsman Redeemer. So when [Jer. 50:34](#) tells us that our *ga’al* is strong, we understand that He has the lawful power or authority not only to present a successful case before the divine court, but also to make sure that the judgment of the law is carried out.

In ancient times, God overthrew Babylon and sold them to “*the Medes and Persians*” ([Dan. 5:28](#)). In our day God is overthrowing Babylon and selling them to “*the kings from the east*” ([Rev. 16:12](#)).

The Court’s Verdict

[Revelation 18:6](#) says,

⁶ Pay her back double even as she has paid, and give back to her double according to her deeds; in the cup which she has mixed, mix twice as much for her.

This is the verdict from the divine court, based on the laws of restitution in [Exodus 22:4](#),

⁴ If what he stole is actually found alive in his possession, whether an ox or a donkey or a sheep, he shall pay double.

The law also says that if the stolen ox, donkey, or sheep has been killed and cannot be returned alive to its owner, then the restitution payment is *fourfold* for a sheep or *fivefold* for an ox ([Exodus 22:1](#)). The fact that divine judgment specifies only double restitution in [Rev. 18:6](#) shows that God’s “sheep” are returned to Him *alive and well*. This is good news for us, because so many today are spreading fear, telling us that we are all going to die. But if that were true, then the restitution payment would be fourfold, rather than just double.

Furthermore, “*our Redeemer is strong*” and well able to restore that which Babylon has stolen. To retain slaves longer than the law allows is a form of theft, but our Kinsman-redeemer is well able to execute the sentence of the law upon Babylon, as we are now witnessing.

The Judgment Fits the Crime

There are multiple charges brought against Babylon, because “*her sins have piled up as high as heaven*.” Therefore, double restitution is not the only judgment imposed on Babylon. All nations were to drink from the Lord’s cup in the hand of Babylon, but once the time of slavery ended, Babylon was no longer authorized to do this. The Babylonian leaders, of course, continued to mix her drinks for everyone in order to keep mankind in a drunken state of spiritual confusion and immorality. So the angel decrees in [Rev. 18:6](#), “*in the cup which she has mixed, mix twice as much for her*.” In other words, bring total confusion upon Babylon, so that her policies will make no sense at all.

All of this follows the basic principle of law found in [Deut. 19:19](#), “*you shall do to him just as he had intended to do to his brother*.” In other words, the judgment fits the crime. It is the Golden Rule in reverse. Those who refuse to treat others as they would want to be treated will be judged in the same manner as they treat others. (Of course, in no way does this deprive the victims of their right to forgive.)

[Revelation 18:7](#) continues,

⁷ To the degree that she glorified herself and lived sensuously, to the same degree give her torment and mourning; for she says in her heart, “I sit as a queen and I am not a widow, and will never see mourning.”

The rulers of Babylon believe that they are privileged and therefore above the law. They make laws for others to follow, but they themselves are exempt. This is their concept of what it means to be a ruler. They live to be served and believe that they deserve to have slaves. But the Kingdom of God is not that way, for even Jesus Himself came to serve. [Matt. 20:25–28](#) says,

²⁵ But Jesus called them to Himself, and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles [*ethnos*, “nations”] lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. ²⁶ It is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, ²⁷ and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; ²⁸ just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

Babylon thinks of herself as a “queen,” that is, as Queen Jezebel or perhaps as the “*queen of heaven*” ([Jer. 44:25](#)). As a queen, she believes that she may do what others cannot do. She may glorify herself and live sensuously (*streniao*, “luxuriously, wantonly”) at the expense of the poor. The divine sentence upon her, therefore, is that she is to be given “*torment and mourning*.” This does not mean torture, but rather that she is to be treated as she treated others.

The Greek word for “torment” is *basanismos*, which is the job of a *basanistes* (jailor). A jailor imprisons people and does what the judge tells him to do. Under Roman or Greek law, of course, jailors often tortured people in order to extract information, but under God’s law lawbreakers are forced to make restitution and also may be treated as they treated others. It may be, of course, that those in authority who demanded torture will themselves be tortured in the same manner, according to the law in [Exodus 21:23–25](#).

Burned with Fire

[Revelation 18:8](#) continues,

⁸ For this reason in one day her plagues will come, pestilence and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; for the Lord God who judges her is strong.

How does one burn a political system or kingdom? Is this done with literal fire? No, this is mainly a reference to the law once again. Babylon is being treated as if she were the daughter of a priest. [Lev. 21:9](#) says,

⁹ Also the daughter of any priest, if she profanes herself by harlotry, she profanes her father; she shall be burned with fire.

The law does not burn anyone *alive*; it only prescribes burning their dead body as a sign of disgrace. (For example, [Joshua 7:25](#).) Jezebel was the daughter of Ethbaal, the king-priest of Sidon ([1 Kings 16:31](#)). He functioned as a counterfeit Melchizedek priest, which is a King-Priest order. Jezebel was also a type of the great harlot of Revelation 17. Hence, she was a daughter of a priest who had profaned herself by harlotry. For this reason she is judged by fire.

So Babylon will be burned with fire as part of the judgment of the law.

Chapter 11: Merchants of Babylon

The fall of Babylon in Revelation 18 was a second fulfillment of the prophecy in Jeremiah 50 and 51. The first round of divine judgment came upon the original city of Babylon, while the second round is now coming upon Mystery Babylon. Though the scene has changed, the spirit of Jeremiah's prophecy remains the same. Babylon today is a worldwide entity, so the prophecy encompasses a greater scope than it did with the original city.

Jeremiah 50 and 51 is a special book which the prophet apparently did not want to publish while Nebuchadnezzar was yet ruling. Most of the prophet's focus up to the time of his letter was in urging the people of Judah and Jerusalem to submit to divine judgment and capitulate to the Babylonians, whom God had raised up as their captors. But in chapters 50 and 51 the prophet speaks of the fall of Babylon that was to occur after 70 years.

He speaks of nations coming from the north that would conquer Babylon ([Jer. 50:41](#); [51:48](#)). Among these nations would be the Medes ([Jer. 51:11](#), [28](#)). He does not mention the Persians by name, but refers to them only indirectly as "*My war-club*," saying "*with you I shatter nations*" ([Jer. 51:20](#)). Such language referred to the constellation *Perseus* with his club by which he shattered, broke, or divided (*peres*) the nations. He is called "*the breaker*" in [Micah 2:13](#), and *peres* is one of the words in the handwriting on the wall in [Dan. 5:28](#), which the prophet identified with Persia.

The Quartermaster's Secret Mission

Jeremiah intended his letter to be read by the king of the Medes and Persians at the time of Babylon's fall. It might have been dangerous for him to prophecy of Babylon's fall while the city was at its height of power. So instead of reading the prophecy to the people of Jerusalem, he sent it with Seraiah, the king's quartermaster, who accompanied King Zedekiah and his delegation on an official mission to Babylon in 593 B.C. [Jeremiah 51:59](#) says,

⁵⁹ The message which Jeremiah the prophet commanded Seraiah the son of Neriah, the grandson of Mahseiah, when he went with Zedekiah the king of Judah to Babylon in the fourth year of his reign. (Now Seraiah was quartermaster.)

It was not unusual for vassal kings to visit their masters, and in this case, Zedekiah probably had to reassure Nebuchadnezzar that he would not revolt against him. The quartermaster's duty was to prepare the camp each night for the king and his guards. Zedekiah's trip to Babylon is not recorded elsewhere, and it would have gone unnoticed except that Jeremiah had a special mission for Seraiah, the quartermaster.

Seraiah was the brother of Baruch, Jeremiah's scribe, friend, and companion. Jeremiah entrusted this mission to a family member. [Jer. 51:60–64](#) says,

⁶⁰ So Jeremiah wrote in a single scroll all the calamity which would come upon Babylon, that is, all these words which have been written concerning Babylon. ⁶¹ Then Jeremiah said to Seraiah, "As soon as you come to Babylon, then see that you read all these words aloud, ⁶²and say, 'Thou, O Lord, hast promised concerning this place to cut it off so that there will be nothing dwelling in it, whether man or beast, but it will be a perpetual desolation.' ⁶³ And it will come about as soon as you finish reading this scroll, you will tie a stone to it and throw it into the middle of the Euphrates, and say, ⁶⁴, 'Just so shall Babylon sink down and not rise again, because of the calamity that I am going to bring upon her; and they will become exhausted'." Thus far are the words of Jeremiah.

We see here that as soon as Seraiah arrived at Babylon, he was to read the scroll as a prophetic decree against the city and then cast it into the Euphrates. No doubt he first put it into a jar and sealed it so that the words would not be obliterated by the water. This was the place where the troops of Cyrus were destined to pass on the night that they took Babylon. When the river dried up, the troops walked along the dry (or muddy) river bed and no doubt stumbled across the jar containing Jeremiah's prophecy about the fall of Babylon. I have no doubt that this letter was taken directly to General Gobryas who was leading the troops, and that he sent it to Cyrus and Darius, the kings from the east.

A stone was to be tied to the jar with the prophecy in order to weight it down and cause it to “*sink down and not rise again*,” depicting Babylon’s demise. So [Jer. 51:42](#) says,

⁴² The sea has come up over Babylon; she has been engulfed with its tumultuous waves.

This did not take place literally with the old city, of course. The sea ([Rev. 17:15](#)) represents people—in this case, the waves of soldiers coming to engulf Babylon. So also in [Rev. 18:21](#), we read,

²¹ And a strong angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, “Thus will Babylon, the great city, be thrown down with violence, and will not be found any longer.”

We see, then, that the stone which Seraiah was to tie to the jar became part of the prophecy itself, for it represented Babylon being cast into the sea and sinking to the bottom.

The Burnt out Mountain

Jeremiah’s letter gives us another metaphor about Babylon in [Jer. 51:25](#),

²⁵ “Behold, I am against you, O destroying mountain, who destroy the whole earth,” declares the Lord, “and I will stretch out My hand against you, and roll you down from the crags and I will make you a burnt out mountain.”

So also the angel tells John in [Rev. 18:8](#), “*she will be burned up with fire*.” The stone that Seraiah put into the jar is fulfilled as a mountain (kingdom), and by linking these two metaphors, we see that Babylon was to be cast into the sea like a burning mountain. [Jer. 51:26](#) says that no one would be able to use this stone, or even part of it, as a corner stone or foundation. The Kingdom of God has Jesus Christ as its Foundation.

Babylon Falls Twice

We read earlier in [Rev. 18:2](#), “*Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great!*” This implies that the city falls twice, once in Daniel 5 and the other in our own time. However, we are also seeing the two collapses in short-term prophecy, where it is taking two “falls” to complete the destruction of Babylon. The first took place in September 2008 with the collapse of the banking system, followed by “The Great Recession.” There is yet another collapse soon to come as a double witness to the event in 2008, which, I believe, will complete the overthrow of Babylon at the hands of the kings from the east.

As we have already seen, the banking collapse of 2008 resulted in a tremendous slowdown in world trade. Ships sat idle in harbors everywhere as the Baltic Dry Index dropped to record lows. In other words, the collapse of Babylon in our time will affect merchants and corporations who rely upon world trade. So we read in [Rev. 18:9–11](#),

⁹ And the kings of the earth who committed acts of immorality and lived sensuously with her [the harlot of Babylon] will weep and lament over her when they see the smoke of her burning, ¹⁰ standing at a distance because of the fear of her torment, saying, “Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon, the strong city! For in one hour your judgment has come.” ¹¹ And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn over her, because no one buys their cargoes any more.

The angel then lists their “cargoes” in order of importance to the merchants:

¹² cargoes of gold and silver and precious stones and pearls and fine linen and purple and silk and scarlet, and every kind of citron wood and every article of ivory and every article made from very costly wood and bronze and iron and marble, ¹³ and cinnamon and spice and incense and perfume and frankincense and wine and olive oil and fine flour and wheat and cattle and sheep, and cargoes of horses and chariots and slaves and human lives.

At the top of the list is “*gold and silver*,” and at the bottom are “*slaves and human lives*,” or human trafficking. The modern slave trade is less well known, because the traffickers themselves control the news media as well as the justice departments worldwide. Whenever news of this begins to be reported, the editors treat the reports as isolated cases so that the politicians and the superrich are not exposed. Yet these secret things will be unveiled at the time appointed.

[Revelation 18:14](#) continues,

¹⁴ And the fruit you long for has gone from you, and all things that were luxurious and splendid have passed away from you and men will no longer find them.

The day will come when those who live in luxury will lose their mansions and palaces, along with their luxurious standard of living. In that day God Himself will redistribute wealth and land. The Kingdom of God begins with a distribution of land inheritance to each family, land which cannot be taken away by governments through taxation, nor can families even sell their land beyond the year of Jubilee.

Everyone will have the most basic form of wealth and the ability to support himself by a covenant with God, even as Joshua divided up the land among the tribes and families of Israel in Joshua 13–22.

Chapter 12: Babylon, Sodom, and Tyre

[Revelation 18:15–17](#) says,

¹⁵ The merchants of these things, who became rich from her, will stand at a distance because of the fear of her torment, weeping and mourning, ¹⁶ saying, “Woe, woe, the great city, she who was clothed in the linen and purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, ¹⁷ for in one hour such great wealth has been laid waste!” And every shipmaster and every passenger and sailor, and as many as make their living by the sea, stood at a distance ...

Although Babylon is oppressive, it also is a place where people can gain much wealth. In fact, the opportunity to make money is its main attraction. Those afflicted with “*the love of money*” ([1 Tim. 6:10](#)) are largely unconcerned with Babylon’s lack of morality or its slave trade. Such things are secondary to most people. In fact, as the people become corrupt, they resist the moral restraints of the God who cares more about personal character and the strength of families than about wealth.

When the Judahites were allowed to leave Babylon, less than 50,000 did so, preferring to remain in Babylon where economic opportunities abounded. For centuries after the time of Ezra and Zerubbabel, Babylon remained the religious center of Judaism. The greatest Jewish scholars lived in Babylon. The Babylonian Talmud therefore had greater authority than the Jerusalem Talmud.

Comparing Sodom and Babylon

In earlier times, Lot chose the fertile plain of Sodom and Gomorrah, while Abraham remained in the land of Canaan. [Gen. 13:11–13](#) says,

¹¹ So Lot chose for himself all the valley of the Jordan; and Lot journeyed eastward. Thus, they separated from each other. ¹² Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled in the cities of the valley, and moved his tents as far as Sodom. ¹³ Now the men of Sodom were wicked exceedingly and sinners against the Lord.

The prospect of wealth draws even righteous men, who think that they will not be affected personally by the immorality of their neighbors. Lot himself was able to maintain a righteous life style, for when God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, [2 Peter 2:7–9](#) says,

⁷ and if He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men ⁸ (for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day with their lawless deeds), ⁹ then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment.

Nonetheless, Lot still hesitated to leave at the urging of the angels ([Gen. 19:15, 16](#)). He begged the angels to let him travel only a short distance to nearby town of Zoar ([Gen. 19:19, 20](#)). Of course, once the full impact of the destruction was seen, Lot “*was afraid to stay in Zoar*,” so he changed his mind and went further to a cave up in the mountains ([Gen. 19:30](#)). So also, in the Day of the Lord, “*men will go into caves of the rocks*” ([Isaiah 2:19](#)). It appears that this will include believers as well as unbelievers.

In this story, Lot represents the church, while Abraham represents the overcomers inheriting the Kingdom. God would not destroy Sodom and Gomorrah until Lot had been evacuated, but at the same time, Lot lost nearly everything—all the wealth that he had accumulated in Sodom.

Burning the City

We may learn many lessons from this story, for the overthrow of these cities is much like the overthrow of Babylon. [Gen. 19:27, 28](#) says,

²⁷ Now Abraham arose early in the morning where he had stood before the Lord; ²⁸ and he looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the valley, and he saw, and behold, the smoke of the land ascended like the smoke of a furnace.

Compare this with what the merchants of Babylon see when their city is destroyed in [Rev. 18:18](#),

¹⁸ and were crying out as they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, “What city is like the great city?”

These merchants and shipmasters are forced to stand at a distance ([Rev. 18:15, 17, 19](#)) as they watch their beloved city burn to the ground. Lot, too, watched from a distance when the valley was on fire. In more recent times, the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York City were destroyed in 2001 as a type of the destruction of Babylon. The two towers are suggested in the statement in [Rev. 18:2](#), “*Fallen, fallen is Babylon.*”

In One Hour

[Rev. 18:10](#) and [17](#) indicate that Babylon falls “*in one hour.*” The angel gives no starting point for this, but news stations often stated that the twin towers collapsed “in one hour.” This suggests that the destruction of the twin towers in 2001 was prophetic and may have set the timing for the actual fall of Babylon on a larger scale.

If a prophetic “day” is the same as a “time” of 360 years, then an hour is either 1/12 of this or 1/24 of this, depending on whether we include the night hours with the daytime hours. Hence, a prophetic “hour” is either 30 years or 15 years. It is 15 years from 2001–2016. It is 30 years from 2001–2031. These, then, are the times to watch for signs of Babylon’s fall.

We might also consider a day to be a thousand years ([Psalm 90:4](#); [2 Peter 3:8](#)), but when we try to divide a thousand by either 12 or 24, it does not come out with an even number. In other words, a day of a thousand years cannot be divided evenly into hours, so it is unlikely that this would be the way that we are to measure a prophetic hour.

The Merchants of Tyre

[Revelation 18:19](#) continues,

¹⁹ And they [the merchants] threw dust on their heads and were crying out, weeping and mourning, saying, “Woe, woe, the great city, in which all who had ships at sea became rich by her wealth, for in one hour she has been laid waste!”

Throwing dust on one’s head was a sign of mourning, as we see in [Joshua 7:6](#),

⁶ Then Joshua tore his clothes and fell to the earth on his face before the ark of the Lord until the evening, both he and the elders of Israel; and they put dust on their heads.

The prophecies about Babylon are also related to those directed at the city of Tyre. Tyre was another merchant city that had become wealthy due to its merchant ships. Tyre was situated on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, so it is no surprise to read about the fall of Tyre in Ezekiel 27 in terms of merchant ships. It seems strange that Babylon, an inland city, would be described in Revelation 18 as a seaport. But prophetic Tyre and Babylon are not the old cities any more. They are the same end-time prophetic city.

Hence, Ezekiel 27 describes the destruction of Babylon in [Rev. 18](#). [Ezekiel 27:26–32](#) says,

The Revelation: Book 7 - Chapter 12: Babylon, Sodom, and Tyre

²⁶ Your rowers have brought you into great waters! The east wind has broken you in the heart of the seas. ²⁷ Your wealth, your wares, your merchandise, your sailors, and your pilots, your repairers of seams, your dealers in merchandise, and all your men of war who are in you, with all your company that is in your midst, will fall into the heart of the seas on the day of your overthrow. ²⁸ At the sound of the cry of your pilots the pasture lands will shake. ²⁹ And all who handle the oar, the sailors, and all the pilots of the sea will come down from their ships; they will stand on the land, ³⁰ and they will make their voice heard over you and will cry bitterly. They will cast dust on their heads, they will wallow in ashes. ³¹ Also they will make themselves bald for you and gird themselves with sackcloth; and they will weep for you in bitterness of soul with bitter mourning. ³² Moreover, in their wailing they will take up a lamentation for you and lament over you: “Who is like Tyre, like her who is silent in the midst of the sea?”

The similarity between the prophecy of Tyre’s destruction and that of Babylon is apparent. “*Who is like Tyre?*” they say in [Ezekiel 27:32](#). “*What city is like the great city?*” they say about Babylon in [Rev. 18:18](#). The merchants of both cities “*cast dust on their heads*” and mourn their financial losses instead of repenting for their immorality and idolatry.

By seeing Tyre and Babylon as the same end-time oppressor-harlot-city ruling the world, it is clear that its main focus is upon accumulating wealth and prosperity by usurping God’s earth unlawfully. Economic success is not a measure of morality, truth, or righteousness. In fact, Babylon’s system tends to create a wealthy class at the expense of the majority. The rich get richer, while the poor get poorer. Hence, the rich tend to enslave the poor.

God’s laws regarding land, inheritance, and even the law of Jubilee are designed to undergird all families with a basic form of wealth that cannot be taken away from them over the long term. Babylon (or Tyre) disregards these laws, allowing the wealth of the earth to flow in the direction of the few until there are only wealthy landowners and their poverty-stricken slaves.

For this reason, the Releasing Captives Angel concludes his lengthy revelation by telling John in [Rev. 18:20](#),

²⁰ Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, because God has pronounced judgment for you against her.

While the merchants of Babylon weep and mourn over their loss, the righteous are told to “*rejoice over her*,” that is, to rejoice over the city’s fall. The reason for rejoicing is that “*God has pronounced judgment for you against her*.” The Emphatic Diaglott clarifies this: “*because God judged your judgment on her*.”

In other words, the saints, apostles, and prophets had taken Babylon to the divine court, and their case was successful. God decreed in favor of the saints of the Most High, as [Dan. 7:22](#) says. Babylon falls, not only because God executes judgment, but because He has ruled in favor of the saints in their appeal to the great Judge of heaven and earth.

Chapter 13: Another Strong Angel

[Revelation 18:21](#) says,

²¹ And a strong angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, “Thus will Babylon, the great city, be thrown down with violence, and will not be found any longer.”

There are no weak angels, but some are described as “strong” in order to let us know that there is no possibility that the prophesied events will fail. This is the third “strong angel” that John saw in the book of Revelation. (See [Rev. 5:2; 10:1; 18:21](#).)

According to my own personal revelation, the “strong angel” in [Rev. 18:21](#) is named according to his job description. His name is *Judging the Lawless*. He is the one responsible for shaking the heavens and the earth ([Heb. 12:26, 27](#)) and to separate the lawless from the lawful ones ([Luke 13:27, 28](#)).

We have already seen how Jeremiah sent his prophecy of the overthrow of Babylon with Seraiah to Babylon and how Seraiah was to attach a stone to it and cast it into the Euphrates ([Jer. 51:60–63](#)). Seraiah was acting out the part of the strong angel in [Rev. 18:21](#) as he cast the stone into the water. As the quartermaster, Seraiah’s job was to prepare the camp for the king of Judah.

So also the strong angel, by casting down Babylon, is called to clear the campsite for the overcomers. Essentially, *Judging the Lawless* angel is a Kingdom quartermaster.

The previous verse ([Rev. 18:20](#)) essentially introduces this angel to us when it tells the saints to rejoice “*because God judged your judgment on her*” (The Emphatic Diaglott).

Great Changes Ahead

The strong angel further describes the overthrow of Babylon in [Rev. 18:22, 23](#), saying,

²² And the sound of harpists and musicians and flute-players and trumpeters will not be heard in you any longer; and the sound of a mill will not be heard in you any longer; ²³ and the light of a lamp will not shine in you any longer; and the voice of the bridegroom and bride will not be heard in you any longer; for your merchants were the great men of the earth, because all the nations were deceived by your sorcery.

During Babylon’s time of dominion, the lawless ones rejoiced with their “musicians,” but when the city falls, their music stops and it is the overcomers’ turn to rejoice. During Babylon’s time of dominion, the lawless ones were well fed with bread from the flour being ground in the mills, but when the city falls, the overcomers provide everyone with the true bread of life ([John 6:35](#)).

During Babylon’s time of dominion, the lawless ones walked at night with the light of their own lamps, but when the city falls, the overcomers provide the true light of the world ([Matt. 5:14; John 8:12](#)) to guide all mankind in the right paths.

During Babylon’s time of dominion, lawless bridegrooms took lawless brides to bring forth another lawless generation, but when the city falls, the true Bridegroom will claim the Bride who has made herself ready ([Rev. 19:7](#)).

Deception by Sorcery

The angel identifies the merchants as “*the great men of the earth*,” telling us that they achieved greatness through deception and “sorcery.” The Greek word translated “sorcery” is *pharmakeia*, which, according to Thayer’s Greek

Lexicon, means “the use or administering of drugs, poisoning, or enchantment.” The modern word is *pharmacy*, that is, the “drug store.”

In John’s time, it was well known that drugs were poisons that put people into a mental state where they could be manipulated, deceived, or enchanted. Such drugs were often used in the mystery religions of the day to assist in “divine revelation.” The angel, however, tells us that this had allowed Babylon to deceive the people with false beliefs.

Today we see the pharmaceutical industry, owned by the great merchants of Babylon. They have convinced large numbers of people that their drugs are beneficial in some way, even though they are advertised often with long lists of harmful side effects.

God never created our bodies or minds with a need for drugs. We are made of the dust of the ground ([Gen. 2:7](#)). Like any farmland, our bodies need to be replenished with minerals, not drugs or chemicals. Yet we poison our bodies with drugs and farmland with chemical fertilizers, and then wonder why sickness and disease has increased exponentially.

The great men of the earth administer drugs and call it “health care.” It is not health care. It is *pharmakeia*. True health care gives the body what it needs according to the plan of the Creator. The strong angel of [Rev. 18:21](#) is preparing to shake the earth, and by the time he finishes his work, the pharmaceutical industry will not remain standing. Its wealth will evaporate as the true paths to health become known and as men discover how they have been deceived in order to make the merchants wealthy.

Blood Liability

[Rev. 18:24](#) concludes the message of the strong angel:

²⁴ And in her [Babylon] was found the blood of prophets and of saints and of all who have been slain on the earth.

This is an astounding statement, for it shows that God holds Babylon liable for “*all who have been slain on the earth*.” In other words, Babylon is held liable for every murder since Cain killed Abel, even though Babylon was built by Nimrod many centuries later ([Gen. 10:8–10](#)). In fact, Babylon was not given the Dominion Mandate until the time of Nebuchadnezzar in 607 B.C. So how could Babylon be held legally liable for “*all who have been slain on the earth*”?

Babylon is more than the old city or the later empire. It is more than the succession of empires (i.e., the four beasts of Daniel 7). The book of Revelation tells us that Babylon is only one of its names. It is also Sodom, Egypt, and Jerusalem ([Rev. 11:8](#)). It is also Tyre and Assyria. Ultimately, it goes back to the rule of the flesh, rather than being ruled by the Spirit.

“*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth*” ([Gen. 1:1](#)). The earth was created to bear witness to heaven and to reflect heavenly glory. However, men of earth usurped *power* instead of remaining under God in a position of godly *authority*. When the earth’s rulers usurped power, they unwittingly took upon themselves the responsibility inherent in that power, which was to establish the Kingdom of God and its righteousness. Yet because they ceased to bear witness to heaven’s decrees, there was no way to fulfill that responsibility, so it became a liability to them.

Throughout history, various nations of the earth have usurped power, even as flesh has usurped power over the Spirit on a personal level. Power or authority bring responsibility. Failure brings liability. Liability brings judgment, or correction. Correction restores all things, and then the full cycle is complete.

In the book of Revelation, Babylon is the entity held liable when the judgment begins that will restore the lawful order in every area of life on earth. The focus is upon Babylon, because John’s revelation was a continuation of Daniel’s revelation. The book is primarily about the fourth beast that was to be given dominion over the earth. Hence, it is the entity held liable.

The Sentence of Gehenna

As we have said earlier, the earthly Jerusalem where Jesus was crucified is also Babylon. This city is to be distinguished from the heavenly Jerusalem. Jesus prophesied against the city of Jerusalem after saying that the scribes and Pharisees were “*full of hypocrisy and lawlessness*” ([Matt. 23:28](#)). He then says in [Matt. 23:29–33](#),

²⁹ Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, ³⁰ and say, “If we had been living in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partners with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.” ³¹ Consequently you bear witness against yourselves, that you are the sons of those who murdered the prophets. ³² Fill up then the measure of the guilt of your fathers. ³³ You serpents, you brood of vipers, how shall you escape the sentence of hell [gehenna]?

It is a principle of law that if a father sins, liability for his debt is binding upon his children by the law of authority. We see this in [Matt. 18:25](#). In fact, we have all been held liable for the sin of our father Adam, and this is why we are mortal. So by this same principle of law, the scribes and Pharisees claimed to be the sons of those who killed the prophets, thereby claiming liability for their murder in the divine court.

So Jesus asks, “*how shall you escape the sentence of gehenna?*” What was this sentence? It is given in Jeremiah 19, where the prophet was led by the Spirit to take an old earthen jar and smash it in “*the valley of Ben-hinnom*” ([Jer. 19:2](#)), which was known later by its Greek name, *Gehenna*. The sentence was pronounced there in [Jer. 19:10, 11](#),

¹⁰ Then you are to break the jar in the sight of the men who accompany you ¹¹ and say to them, “Thus says the Lord of hosts, ‘Just so shall I break this people and this city, even as one breaks a potter’s vessel, which cannot again be repaired; and they will bury in Topheth because there is no other place for burial.’”

This is the sentence of Gehenna. It was the utter destruction of the earthly Jerusalem in such a manner that it could never again be repaired or rebuilt. The reason, Jesus says, is because the religious leaders in Jerusalem claimed to be the physical children of those who killed the prophets. By identifying themselves as the children of those who were liable, they witnessed against themselves in the divine court.

Jesus continues in [Matt. 23:34–36](#),

³⁴ Therefore, behold, I am sending you prophets and wise men and scribes; some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city, ³⁵ that upon you may fall the guilt of all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. ³⁶ Truly I say to you, all these things shall come upon this generation [*genea*, “offspring”].

So we see that the city of Jerusalem, with its leaders in Judaism, will be held liable not only for murdering the prophets, but also going back to the first martyr, Abel, whom Cain murdered in [Gen. 4:8](#). Both Jerusalem and Babylon are held liable for all the bloodshed going back to the beginning. Hence, legally speaking, these two cities are the same—along with Sodom, Tyre, and others, each in their own way.

We may expect, then, that the judgment upon Babylon will see also the final destruction of the earthly Jerusalem, for this is “*the sentence of gehenna*.” The children of the flesh, who consider the earthly Jerusalem to be their spiritual mother, will all be held liable on some level. Unfortunately, even many Christians claim Jerusalem to be their spiritual mother and will therefore suffer whatever loss is appropriate when the divine judgment is carried out.

The strong angel, whose name is *Judging the Lawless*, is the one called to carry out this sentence.

The Vineyard Parable

Jesus' parable about the vineyard ([Matt. 21:33–40](#)) revealed the fact that the religious leaders in Jerusalem were the caretakers of the Kingdom who killed the prophets and the Son in order to usurp for themselves the benefits of the Kingdom. Jesus then asked them to judge the situation, and they said, "*He will bring those wretches to a wretched end, and will rent out the vineyard to other vine-growers, who will pay him the proceeds at the proper seasons*" ([Matt. 21:41](#)).

Their verdict was correct, of course, but they did not realize that Jesus was asking them to judge themselves. We then read the final conclusion in [Matt. 21:42–44](#),

⁴² Jesus said to them, "Did you never read in the Scriptures, 'The stone which the builders rejected, this became the chief corner stone; this came about from the Lord, and it is marvelous in our eyes'? ⁴³ Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and be given to a nation producing the fruit of it. ⁴⁴ And he who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust."

The two biblical references on which Jesus' judgment are based come from [Psalm 118:22](#), [23](#) and [Dan. 2:35](#). Jesus was the rejected corner stone, and so the parable has the caretakers killing the Son in order to usurp the Kingdom for themselves. But Jesus is also the stone that will fall on the feet of the image representing the four empires, grinding them to "chaff" or "powder," after which the stone replaces those world kingdoms with the Kingdom of God.

Why would Jesus bring up this prophecy from Daniel? We can say with confidence that this was part of the verdict upon the religious leaders of Jerusalem—not only them, but their descendants as well. The iron kingdom, after all, was still at its height of power in Jesus' time, and the little horn had not yet manifested itself. The grindstone was yet afar off. So obviously, when Jesus said, "I say to YOU," he was not referring only to the religious leaders of His own generation, but to their successors who were yet to be born.

But what relevance would this have to the leaders of Jerusalem? Were they part of Nebuchadnezzar's image that was to be ground to powder at the end of the age?

Essentially, Jesus was warning their descendants that if they should take power over Babylon at the time the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, that stone would grind them to powder. In other words, if the Rothschilds or other Jewish leaders were to take control of Babylon through banking and the power of money, they would take upon themselves the liability for the entire image that was slated for destruction at the end of the age.

This is, of course, precisely what occurred. The final beast in [Rev. 13:11–18](#) was indeed financed and controlled by Jewish bankers (and their allies). They worked hard to accomplish this goal in order to create wealth for themselves, to better the lives of their fellow Jews, and ultimately to establish a Jewish state in 1948. In other words, they did not heed Jesus' warning, nor did they submit to the divine decree that they should be replaced by "*a nation producing the fruit of it*." They disagreed with Jesus and continued to think of themselves as the chosen keepers of the vineyard, even though they had judged themselves and Jesus merely agreed with their own verdict!

The reason God rejected them as the ones chosen to oversee the Kingdom is due to their murdering the prophets and finally the Son of God Himself. That, in fact, is the whole point of the parable of the vineyard. They killed the servants and finally the Son, not because they failed to recognize who they were, but *because they knew precisely who they were*. Hence, [Matt. 21:38](#) says about their treatment of the Son,

³⁸ But when the vine-growers saw the son, they said among themselves, "This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and seize his inheritance."

When men commit crimes, they seldom—if ever—believe that they will be caught or that they will have to pay for their crimes. In that sense, they are blind to what they do. But insofar as their immediate actions are concerned, they

usually know what they are doing and that it is wrong. Yet they justify their actions in some way, or they calculate that they will likely not be caught or held liable.

The Jewish leaders could not help but know that He was the promised Messiah, for His miracles alone proved this. Yet because He had no intention of using miracles to overthrow Rome, and because He disregarded many of their traditional interpretations of the law, they knew that they would lose their own leadership positions if He were to be accepted as the Messiah. Hence, their motives were based on self-interest, disguised by the idea that Jesus' policies would be bad for the nation.

Jesus' parable of the vineyard gives the lawful basis for God's rejection of the Jews as caretakers of the Kingdom. After Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 A.D., the Jewish dispersion shattered their hopes that were based upon their belief that they were chosen. In the 19th century the rise of the Rothschilds renewed their messianic hopes about ruling the world, though they had not repented for the causes of divine rejection.

Their tactic, as led by the Rothschilds, was to take over Babylon and to establish Jerusalem as the world capital. While they were successful in doing this, all they really did was *to become the feet of the image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream*, which were composed of iron and clay. The result is that when the stone hits the feet of this image, Jerusalem will be destroyed, and the Jewish people will again find themselves betrayed after putting their trust in their religious leaders.

So the destruction of Babylon in [Rev. 18:21](#) will coincide in some way with the utter destruction of Jerusalem in [Jer. 19:11](#). The two cities are legally inseparable, for both cities are liable for the same crime—shedding the blood of the prophets, saints, and “*all who have been slain on the earth.*”

One final note: The “nation” that is given temporary charge of the vineyard was the church that has ruled as “Saul” during the Age of Pentecost. But in the end it is the overcomers (the “David” company) that will be given the Kingdom. These are the “*saints of the Most High*” that are given the Kingdom in [Dan. 7:22, 27](#). These are the “saints” mentioned in [Rev. 18:20](#) and [24](#).

Their genealogy does not make them saints; it is their faith in Jesus Christ, the New Covenant, and the divine plan as a whole which sets them apart from humanity and makes them fit to rule the Kingdom.

This ends our study of Revelation 18, which justifies God's judgment upon Babylon (and Jerusalem). Here the legal case against Babylon is set forth, so that we will understand that God's judgments are true and righteous altogether.

Chapter 14: The Aftermath of Judgment

Revelation 19 correlates with *koph*, which is the 19th letter of the Hebrew alphabet that means “the back of the head, or what comes after.” In this case it is the aftermath of the judgment upon Babylon, the great harlot.

Chapter 19 starts out as a celestial praise and worship session for achieving victory, followed by the marriage scene. [Rev. 19:1, 2](#) says,

¹ After these things I heard, as it were, a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, “Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God; ² because His judgments are true and righteous; for He has judged the great harlot who was corrupting the earth with her immorality, and He has avenged the blood of His bond-servants on her.”

The multitude in heaven are not identified as either men or angelic hosts. It does not matter, because the focus is upon the righteousness of divine judgment upon the great harlot, who is faulted for “*corrupting the earth with her immorality*” and for killing the prophets and saints. God is recognized as the Owner of all that He created, and this seems to be the purpose of His judgment. It is on account of the “*true and righteous*” nature of His judgments that “*salvation and glory and power belong to our God.*”

The great harlot of Babylon had established her power and glory upon injustice, immorality, and murder, while God allowed this to continue for a season. In terms of Daniel’s four beasts, that season was for “seven times,” or 2,520 years. But this also goes deeper, for the end of “seven times” from Nebuchadnezzar is also the end of six “days” of slavery to mortal flesh (i.e., 6,000 years). God’s original judgment upon Adam has enslaved the whole creation for six days.

The Laws of Sabbath and Slavery

The law in [Exodus 21:2](#) says,

² If you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall serve for six years; but on the seventh he shall go out as a free man without payment.

The presumption behind this law is that a man incurred a debt, often through sin, and that a judge had sentenced him to be sold in payment of that debt. Such slaves were to be set free after six years, according to the Sabbatical principle of resting every seventh day. Of course, if the man still owed more on his debt, he would be required to return to his slavery at the end of the seventh day. It was only at the Jubilee that any further debt was to be cancelled permanently, so that he could return to his property as a free man.

As we will see later, Revelation 20 speaks of a thousand-year Sabbath, where the entire earth is given rest from Babylonian oppression. However, then comes the Great White Throne judgment, at which time many will be judged and sentenced to be enslaved to the overcomers. This does not give the overcomers the right to abuse their slaves, of course. In fact, it will be a time when the overcomers will show their slaves (by example) the love of Christ, so that the slaves (former sinners) will learn the ways of God in a perfect environment.

This judgment of God, as we will explain later, is “*the lake of fire*,” or what Moses called “*the fiery law*” in [Deut. 33:2 \(KJV\)](#). It is not a torture chamber, but a condition of divine judgment according to the law of God. The law of God does not torture men unless they have tortured others. Instead, it sentences them to be “sold,” that is, to be placed under authority and to work to pay their debts.

God so sentenced man at the beginning ([Gen. 3:17–19](#)), and man’s enslavement to sin has continued for six “days” to the present time. The overthrow of Babylon was necessary because “*they have refused to let them go*” ([Jer. 50:33](#)) at

the time specified by law. John's revelation (as we will see) treats the millennium in Revelation 20 as a Sabbath for the whole earth, which is why I believe it is a literal time period.

Meanwhile, the multitude in heaven praise God for his righteous judgments upon the oppressor that has refused to respect the law of release in the Sabbath year. While there have been many lesser cases before the divine court during the past 6,000 years, the judgment against the great harlot had its roots in the original case against Adam.

The Smoke of Sacrifice

[Revelation 19:3](#), [4](#) says,

³ And a second time they said, “Hallelujah! Her smoke rises up forever and ever” [*eis tous aionas ton aionon*, “for the ages of the ages” (Diaglott)]. ⁴ And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sits on the throne, saying, “Amen. Hallelujah!”

The smoke is seen rising prophetically from the destruction of Babylon. This is also a reference to the smoke seen rising from Sodom and Gomorrah ([Gen. 19:28](#)). It is also the same smoke seen rising from the destruction of Edom ([Isaiah 34:10](#)) and from gehenna, where Jerusalem is judged in unquenchable fire ([Jer. 19:12](#); [Isaiah 66:24](#)).

Yet this smoke also serves another purpose when considered on the prophetic level seen in Revelation 19. Smoke was an important symbol in various sacrifices, and so we see how the judgment of God upon Babylon was also considered to be a great sacrifice. For example, [Lev. 5:12](#) says,

¹² And he shall bring it to the priest, and the priest shall take his handful of it as its memorial portion and offer it up in smoke on the altar, with the offerings of the Lord by fire; it is a sin offering [*khattaw*].

The fact that the twenty-four elders and four living creatures worship God when they see the rising smoke can give our western minds the wrong impression. Are they really ecstatic about the death of the great harlot and the destruction of these cities? No, they rejoice because the sin has been dealt with, and the lawful order has been restored. This is the purpose of any sacrifice, such as the “sin offering” in the verse above.

Sin and Sin Offerings

The fire represents the law of God as it consumes the *khattaw*, “sin offering,” transforming it from substance to vapor that dissipates. The word *khattaw* literally means “sin,” but it also refers to a “sin offering,” because the offering represents the sin itself and is its substitute.

The word *khattaw* is referenced in Greek terms in [2 Cor. 5:21](#),

²¹ He made Him who knew no sin to be sin [i.e., sin offering] on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Here we must understand Paul's statement, not with a Greek mindset, but with Hebrew understanding. Jesus was sinless, but He became a sin offering (*khattaw*) on our behalf. Strictly speaking, He did not become “sin” for us, except insofar as the sin offering was identified with the sin of the one needing atonement or reconciliation.

Divine Judgment as a Sacrifice

The judgment of God may fall upon Jesus Christ on our behalf, paying the penalty for our sin; but those who do not have faith in His sacrifice are required to pay their own debt to the law. They are thus treated as a sacrifice in the attempt to pay the debt for their own sin. The problem with this, of course, is that it is an imperfect sacrifice that yet requires one greater to bring full reconciliation between the sinner and God. In that sense, it is similar to all animal sacrifices, which had to be repeated, because they were insufficient and therefore were only stop-gap measures.

So when the great harlot is judged, and her smoke rises, it is like an Old Covenant sin offering, which provides a temporary measure of debt-relief until the full reconciliation can take place later. Another way of putting it is in the distinction between atonement and reconciliation. Atonement “covers” sin; reconciliation “removes” sin altogether. Atonement gives an appearance of perfection or cleanliness. All animal sacrifices merely atoned, or covered, sin, giving us a legal perfection, but not actual perfection. Only the blood of the perfect Lamb of God could bring full and permanent reconciliation to mankind.

[Isaiah 34:6](#) speaks of Edom’s destruction, saying, “*The Lord has a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Edom.*” In other words, the destruction of Edom and Bozrah, its capital city, was pictured in terms of God’s “sacrifice.”

Likewise, [Ezekiel 39:17](#) says the same of Gog and Magog: “*Assemble and come, gather from every side to My sacrifice, which I am going to sacrifice for you, as a great sacrifice on the mountains of Israel, that you may eat flesh and drink blood.*”

This is the verse referenced toward the end of Revelation 19 as well, where it is called “*the great supper of God*” ([Rev. 19:17](#)). Ezekiel tells us that it is a divine Sacrifice, which, in the law, was to be eaten. [Lev. 6:26](#) says,

²⁶ The priest who offers it for sin [*khattaw*, “sin” or “sin offering”] shall eat it. It shall be eaten in a holy place, in the court of the tent of meeting.

Hallelujah

The great multitude shout “Hallelujah!” It is not that they rejoice over the destruction, but that God has considered this to be a sacrifice. This satisfied the law, which says that “*the wages of sin is death*” ([Rom. 6:23](#)). Like all Old Covenant sacrifices, it deals with the sin problem, though incompletely, awaiting the Great White Throne judgment, when every knee will bow and every tongue will confess Jesus as Lord and Savior ([Phil. 2:10, 11](#)).

As always we must view the law as corrective in nature, rather than in destructive terms. The destruction is temporary, along with death itself, for all things end with creation itself entering into the glorious freedom of the children of God ([Rom. 8:21](#)).

So [Rev. 19:4](#) pictures the four living creatures, representing the creation itself, shouting “Amen! Hallelujah!” to the great sacrifice of God, knowing that the divine plan is perfect and will result in the reconciliation of all things.

[Revelation 19:5](#) says,

⁵ And a voice came from the throne, saying, “Give praise to our God, all you His bond-servants, you who fear Him, the small and the great.”

Whose voice was this coming from the throne? It seems inappropriate for God Himself to tell the people to “*give praise to our God.*” The speaker is a co-worshiper who recognizes “*our God*” as separate from himself.

We know that the twenty-four elders “*sit on their thrones before God*” ([Rev. 11:16](#)). They also worship “*God who sits on the throne*” ([Rev. 19:4](#))—that is, another (greater) throne. Hence, the voice cannot be coming from the thrones of the twenty-four elders.

The Controversy

The voice can only be coming from the highest throne, and yet the words imply that someone other than God Himself is speaking. But what if there is more than one God, or God-identity? After all, even Moses was “*a god unto Pharaoh*” ([Exodus 7:1, KJV](#)). Likewise, [Psalm 82:6](#) says “*You are gods, and all of you are sons of the Most High.*” Jesus validated this in [John 10:33–36](#),

³³ The Jews answered Him, “For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God.” ³⁴ Jesus answered them, “Has it not been written in your Law, ‘I said, you are gods’? ³⁵ If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), ³⁶ do you say of Him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, ‘You are blaspheming,’ because I said, ‘I am the Son of God’?”

This controversy is one of the basic differences between Judaism and Christianity, mostly because it involves the balance between Monotheism and Sonship. To be a “god” is to occupy a position of power or authority that is higher than others. While there is truly only one God in the ultimate sense, there are lesser “gods” as well—including Moses ([Exodus 7:1](#)) and all whom the Psalmist called “gods” in [Psalm 82:6](#).

The question is whether a “son of God” has the right to be called “God” without infringing upon the position of the Most High God and without creating a polytheistic religion. Yet even the term “*Most High God*” implies subordinate positions that may still be called “God.” Hence, when all things are subjected under the feet of Christ, He is the God of the whole earth, yet “*it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him*” ([1 Cor. 15:27](#)). Paul tells us in the next verse,

²⁸ And when all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, that God may be all in all.

There are two great issues involved in this: substance and position. Jesus and His Father are of one *substance*, and in that sense Paul could make Him equal to God in [Phil. 2:5–7](#),

⁵ Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.

In other words, Christ Jesus, in spite of His being of equal substance with “*God*,” did not refuse to take upon Himself the position of “*a bond-servant*,” appearing on earth “*in the likeness of men*.”

Even so, the Son is subjected to the Father in His *position*. Another way of looking at it is that the Most High God has self-derived power (*dunamis*), while the Son was given authority (*exousia*), as He Himself said in [Matt. 28:18](#),

¹⁸ And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority [*exousia*] has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.”

Authority is authorized, or “given,” by a higher power. In no way does this disqualify Jesus from being called God, for [Heb. 1:8](#) says,

⁸ But of the Son He says, “Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever, and the righteous scepter is the scepter of His kingdom.”

Hence, Jesus has a “throne” that is distinct from the Father’s throne. [Heb. 12:2](#) says that He “*has sat down at the right hand [i.e., on the right-hand side] of the throne of God.*” Since there is more than one throne, then from which throne does the voice come, telling the people to praise “our God” in [Rev. 19:5](#)? Is it the throne of the Father? Or is it the throne of the Son pictured on the right side of the Father’s throne?

It can only be the voice of the Son of God, telling the people to praise “*our God*,” for Jesus always deferred to His Father, saying in [John 20:17](#), “*I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.*” For this reason, I conclude that the voice coming from the throne in [Rev. 19:5](#) is the voice of Jesus, yet it comes through a member of His body, identified as “a fellow servant” in [Rev. 19:10](#).

The Authority of Church Councils

There have been many books written in the attempt to explain the nature of Christ and His relationship with the Father. This controversy dominated all other issues from the fourth century on, and many were killed for even slightly deviating from established creeds (on all sides of this issue). In fact, in the controversy between the Arians and the Orthodox, one’s belief on this issue largely replaced faith as the litmus test of a genuine believer. It raised the importance of church creeds and men’s understanding of God and Christ to the point where it was thought that true believers were those who confessed the established creeds, rather than having simple faith in Christ.

If Church Councils had truly been led by the Holy Spirit, as the church claims, the bishops would have acted in love. They would have prayed until the word of prophecy came to give them the understanding necessary to know the truth. However, they came to the Councils with their own pre-conceived answers and many proceeded to argue, bribe, and even threaten their opponents, in order to establish truth by the power of the flesh. Hence, rarely did they establish genuine truth.

In 382 A.D. Gregory of Nazianzus, one of the most revered bishops in the early church, described an ecumenical council held a year earlier:

“To tell the truth, I am inclined to shun every collection of bishops, because I have never yet seen that a synod came to a good end, or abated evils instead of increasing them. For in those assemblies (and I do not think I express myself too strongly here) indescribable contentiousness and ambition prevail, and it is easier for one to incur the reproach of wishing to set himself up as judge of the wickedness of others, than to attain any success in putting the wickedness away. Therefore I have withdrawn myself, and have found rest to my soul only in solitude.” [Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. III, p. 347]

Schaff makes his own comment on pages 347–348, saying,

“Yet there remains enough in his many unfavorable pictures of the bishops and synods of his time, to dispel all illusions of their immaculate purity... In the fifth century it was no better, but rather worse. At the third general council, at Ephesus, 431, all accounts agree that shameful intrigue, uncharitable lust of condemnation, and coarse violence of conduct were almost as prevalent as in the notorious robber-council of Ephesus in 449;

though with the important difference, that the former synod was contending for truth, the latter for error. Even at Chalcedon, the introduction of the renowned expositor and historian Theodoret provoked a scene, which almost involuntarily reminds us of the modern brawls of Greek and Roman monks at the holy sepulcher under the restraining supervision of the Turkish police.”

Such behavior among the church leaders does not inspire confidence that they fought their way to the truth. If Jesus had truly led such Church Councils, the wisdom of God would have become apparent to all, and we could then treat their decisions with the respect of Scripture itself. But unfortunately, Christ had already been banished from the Councils that met in His name, and so their decisions were mere “traditions of men.” While their creeds certainly contain truth, they are products of men’s minds and not infallible.

There is no way to deal fully with the nature of Christ and His relationship to His Father, nor will we try. Our main purpose is to determine whose voice it was coming from the throne, telling the great multitude to praise “our God.”

The Response

[Revelation 19:6](#) continues,

⁶ And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude and as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty peals of thunder saying, “Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns.

The praise here goes to both the Father and the Son. Both can be said to reign, as we see from Paul’s teaching in [1 Cor. 15:27, 28](#). What is this great multitude? Obviously, they are all in agreement with God and His judgments upon the great harlot and Babylon. The multitude is certainly the same group seen praising God earlier in [Rev. 5:11](#).

It does not yet seem to include the greater multitude in [Rev. 5:13](#), which pictures praise from “*every living thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea.*” The voice from the throne seems to limit the command to “*His bondservants, you who fear Him,*” as if there are still others who are NOT God’s bond-servants. Since this praise comes at the time of Babylon’s judgment, it is evident that not all things are yet put under His feet. Hence, we cannot think of this as a scene of universal reconciliation and agreement with God.

In fact, as we proceed in our study, we find that the judgment of Babylon and the praise of the saints comes around the time of the coming of Christ ([Rev. 19:11–16](#)). We know from other Scriptures that there will be many unbelievers in the earth at that time, and that during the Kingdom Age that follows, many will want to learn His ways ([Isaiah 2:3](#)).

The curious idea that Christ’s second coming is a deadline to believe and to be saved is, of course, a serious misunderstanding of the divine plan. The second coming of Christ is only a deadline to be included in the body of overcomers who are raised in the first resurrection. These will “*reign upon the earth*” ([Rev. 5:10](#)) “*for a thousand years*” ([Rev. 20:4, 6](#)). The rest will not reign, though many will be citizens of the Kingdom.

The purpose of the overcomers’ reign will be to demonstrate the power of God as the gospel is preached to the nations, and while the great “stone” kingdom grows until it fills the whole earth ([Dan. 2:35](#)). Hence, rather than seeing Christ’s second coming as a deadline for salvation, we ought to see it as a new beginning point for the gospel to be preached with greater power than ever before seen, even surpassing the signs and wonders that occurred after Pentecost was fulfilled in the book of Acts.

Chapter 16: The Bride is ready

The voice from the throne continues in [Revelation 19:7](#), saying,

⁷ Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His bride has made herself ready.

The bride emerges after the fall of the counterfeit bride, that is, the great harlot of Babylon. For this reason, the emergence of the true bride is timed after the counterfeit bride (the harlot) is exposed, judged, and cast down. We know that Babylon was given dominion over the nations for seven times as a judgment upon Israel and Judah. Hence, it is clear that the exposure and fall of the great harlot is the time when true Israel is recognized once again as the bride.

But much has changed since Israel and Judah were in their old land. When Israel is resurrected from the valley of dry bones, she comes forth no longer fleshly, but as a new creation.

Recall that Israel and Judah were cast out of the land for continuously violating the (old) covenant. That covenant was rendered null and void on account of their refusal and inability to fulfill their vow. For that reason, Jeremiah spoke of a new covenant and the reason why this was necessary. [Jer. 31:31, 32](#) says,

³¹ “Behold, the days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, ³² not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them,” declares the Lord.

It is clear from this that the prophet understood that the old covenant was a marriage covenant, which they had broken. The vows taken at Mount Sinai in [Exodus 19:6–8](#) were marriage vows, and Moses was the minister performing that marriage. Moses brought the marriage proposal to Israel, and she agreed to those conditions. The people then prepared themselves for three days, and God then became Israel’s husband. [Exodus 19:10, 11](#) says,

¹⁰ The Lord also said to Moses, “Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their garments; ¹¹ and let them be ready for the third day, for on the third day the Lord will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people.

The marriage was to be consummated when the Husband came to claim His bride. This was the day that would later be known as Pentecost, the day God spoke the Ten Commandments. He came with the appearance of fire, in order to impregnate them with the seed of the word that would beget Christ in them.

Of course, the problem was that Israel was too fearful to hear the word, and they told Moses to go up the mount and relay to them the words of God ([Exodus 20:18–21](#)). Eventually, their fear put distance between them, and this marriage covenant eventually was dissolved. God divorced Israel for adultery with other gods ([Jer. 3:8](#)).

The Remnant of Grace

The Old Covenant marriage failed to produce the sons of God, because the nation as a whole was too afraid of their Husband to get close to Him and to bear His children. So only on an individual level did any of them actually consummate the marriage in order to bring forth the sons of God. These few individuals came to be known as the remnant of grace. They numbered 7,000 in Elijah’s time, and Paul commented on them in [Rom. 11:4–7](#). Paul shows the distinction between the nation and the remnant of grace in verses 5–7, saying,

⁵ In the same way then, there has come to be at the present time a remnant according to God’s gracious choice. ⁶ But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace. ⁷

What then? That which Israel is seeking for, it has not obtained, but those who were chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened.

Under the Old Covenant, the nation was required to fulfill its vow, but Israel as a whole was unable to do so. Nonetheless, because God had already made a New Covenant vow to make them His people by the council of His own will, He preserved a remnant of grace in each generation—those who would overcome their fear of a direct relationship with God and embrace Him by faith. These formed only a tiny minority of the nation itself. “*The rest were hardened,*” Paul says.

When Jesus came as the Mediator of the New Covenant, it was expected that all who followed Him would be part of the remnant of grace. However, the church largely followed the pattern of Israel under Moses, and so the remnant of grace remained a minority throughout the Pentecostal Age. By definition, the church had faith in Jesus Christ, and so Christ was begotten in them; however, their problem came during pregnancy, for the Christ in them was often malnourished by the famine of hearing the word. Many even rejected the law.

For this reason, Christians have often miscarried and some have deliberately aborted the Christ that was in them. I wrote about this in my booklet, [The Prophetic Roots of Modern Abortion](#).

The bottom line is that the church as a whole failed as much as Israel of old before them. Yet in each generation God preserved a remnant of grace throughout the years, so that at the end of the age there would be a sufficient number to form a prophetic “baby” (son) that can be born into the world. These are the manifested sons of God who are born to the bride that emerges in [Rev. 19:7](#).

The bride is the “nation” who brings forth the fruit of the Kingdom. This nation is the one Jesus prophesied about in [Matt. 21:43](#),

⁴³ Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and be given to a nation producing the fruit of it.

This was a direct reference to the remnant of grace that has taken thousands of years to be fully formed. This nation is a New Covenant bride, chosen by grace, truly God’s Chosen People. It is comprised not only of genealogical descendants of Abraham, but also of all who are begotten by the Spirit of God through the New Covenant.

Israel, the Bride

There is a classic dispute over the identity of the bride. Some say it is Israel; others say it is the church. Both are right, but those who take one position or the other are not seeing the complete picture. Israel is called “*the church in the wilderness*” ([Acts 7:38 KJV](#)). The whole nation was called out of Egypt in order to become the church. The same is true with the New Covenant church that was called out of Judaism. Judea and Jerusalem was their “Egypt,” the house of bondage, whose leaders, like Pharaoh, persecuted and enslaved the people. Paul calls Jerusalem “Hagar” in [Gal. 4:25](#), because Hagar was an Egyptian.

Scripture shows us that there are actually two brides, each corresponding to a different covenant. Israel under Moses was the Old Covenant bride; the church under Jesus Christ is the New Covenant bride. In Galatians 4, Paul shows that Abraham had two wives that allegorically portrayed these two covenants: Hagar and Sarah. Both were married to Abraham, but only one could bring forth the chosen seed. The bondwoman could bring forth only children of the flesh.

It would be foolish to insist that only one of Abraham’s wives was married to him. We must recognize the validity of both marriages. Yet we must recognize that one marriage produced children of the flesh, while the other produced the sons of God, or spiritual children. The Old Covenant (Hagar) could not produce spiritual children, because this covenant was based upon the will of man, or man’s vow ([Exodus 19:8](#)). Only the New Covenant (Sarah) can bring forth the sons of God, because it is based on the promise (or vow) of God Himself and is therefore based upon grace, which is by His will alone. So Paul says in [Gal. 4:28, 29](#),

The Revelation: Book 7 - Chapter 16: The Bride is ready

²⁸ And you, brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise. ²⁹ But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh [i.e., Ishmael] persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now also.

The children of Hagar-Jerusalem persecuted the children of Sarah (New Jerusalem), driving them out of Jerusalem and Judea ([Acts 8:1](#)). The Old Covenant city, being the first-born, believed that it was the “mother” of the chosen people. They did not like it when another son was born through a different mother and by a different covenant. They knew—with good reason—that this spiritual son of the New Covenant was their competitor for the inheritance.

Who is Israel?

Scripture always calls Israel a “nation,” never a race. In fact, the nation of Israel, though led by twelve tribes who were direct descendants of the sons of Jacob, also included many from other nations. There were thousands in Abraham’s camp even before he had a single son, when he sent 318 men “*born in his house*” ([Gen. 14:14](#)) to defeat the kings of Shinar. These were “*the household of faith*” ([Gal. 6:10](#)), because they were spiritual “children” of Abraham ([Gal. 3:7, 9, 29](#)). Over the centuries, those families who were not literally of Abraham’s seed, actually formed the bulk of the *nation* of Israel.

About 400 years later, when the nation left Egypt with a population of about six million, those of Abraham’s household were fully integrated into the tribes of Israel, even if they were not of his direct bloodline. Furthermore, many Egyptians joined them, for they joined with Israel ([Exodus 12:38](#)). Since there was no land set aside for a tribe of Egyptians in the land of Canaan, it is evident that these Egyptians became members of the tribe of their choice.

The law never excluded people of other nations, but rather encouraged Israel to be a light to the nations and to be a blessing to all other nations. Eventually, of course, the nation of Israel was divorced and sent out of God’s house into the land of Assyria. But when God promised to regather them, He said through the prophet in [Isaiah 56:8](#),

⁸ The Lord God, who gathers the dispersed of Israel, declares, “Yet others I will gather to them, to those already gathered.”

In the end, Israel under the Old Covenant failed not only to follow God for themselves, but also failed to dispense the blessings of God to all nations. Under the New Covenant, Jesus gave His disciples the Great Commission ([Matt. 28:19, 20](#)), which was essentially to fulfill the Abrahamic covenant, which the children of the flesh had refused to fulfill.

People have tried to distinguish between Israel and the church because they think that Israel was limited to a particular genealogy, not realizing that most Israelites were not even physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob. They were a *nation*, not a single genealogy. In fact, the goal was for all men to become children of Abraham by faith, regardless of genealogy. The divine plan is not complete until all of humanity become Israelite citizens.

In Jesus’ day, the church was begun mostly by people from Judea and Galilee and a few Greeks. Because of the great rebellion of Judah against its rightful King, the bulk of that nation was “cut off” as the law commanded ([Lev. 17:4](#)). Those who supported Jesus as the Heir became the remnant of Judah (as recognized by God), and hence, what men now call “the church” was actually the tribe or nation of Judah. To these were added many from other nations as they came to believe in Jesus Christ and to support His claim to the throne of Judah and of the world.

Unfortunately, the church itself degenerated over time, and so there came to be a distinction between the church as a whole and the remnant of grace within it. Like Ishmael and the Jews, the church has persecuted the remnant of grace. The Inquisitions prove that the church in Rome was another fleshly religion manifesting the spirit of Hagar and Ishmael, rather than that of Sarah and Isaac.

In the end of the age, then, the true bride that emerges in [Rev. 19:7](#) is not the entire church, but is the remnant of grace that has emerged from its time of persecution at the hands of the children of the flesh. This “Sarah” bride is the New Covenant and the New Jerusalem ([Gal. 4:24, 25](#)), whose “children” are those begotten by the Spirit. The bride is certainly “Israel,” but we cannot limit this term to those who are Israelites by fleshly birth.

For this reason, as we have already seen, the overcomers (i.e., the remnant of grace) are described in [Rev. 5:9, 10](#) as people “*from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.*” They are all Israelites who have followed the footsteps of Jacob in his quest to become an Israelite. Like Jacob, they have walked by faith and have finally wrestled with God. They have come face to face with a new revelation of the sovereignty of God. They bear the testimony of *Israel*, “God rules.”

Lesser and Better Promises

If we look for a precedent from the Old Covenant, where God married Israel at Sinai, we see that the first betrothal actually took place 430 years earlier when God gave the promise to Abraham. While this promise could also include the time going back to Adam, it is better to think of the promise to Abraham as the true betrothal of the nation that was yet to come of him.

[Gen. 12:1–3](#) says that Abraham was to leave his father’s house, which was normal in a marriage. God was to bless His wife, honor her by making her name great and by giving her children. He was also to cause her to be a blessing to others. Likewise, He was to protect her from the curses of others, saying, “*the one who curses you I will curse.*”

These are the main elements in a betrothal. The actual marriage in the days of Moses fulfilled those promises in fleshly ways, but not in the way that God really had in mind. Israel did increase in numbers, but her children were fleshly, not spiritual. The real promise was to bring forth the sons of God, but the Old Covenant brought forth only fleshly children.

Their “house” was Canaan, an earthly land inheritance. This was different from the country and city that Abraham actually sought ([Heb. 11:16](#)), while “*he lived as an alien in the land of promise as in a foreign land*” ([Heb. 11:9](#)). Though Abraham lived in Canaan, he “*died in faith without receiving the promises*” ([Heb. 11:13](#)). The book of Hebrews makes it clear that his failure to receive the promise was not on account of his lack of land ownership in Canaan, but rather that he sought “*a better country, that is, a heavenly one*” ([Heb. 11:16](#)). In other words, the true inheritance was better than Canaan.

Hence, the Old Covenant was about fleshly promises and fulfillments that were designed to fail on account of their fleshly nature. By contrast, the New Covenant was about better promises and better things. Speaking of Christ in contrast to Moses, [Heb. 8:6](#) says,

⁶ But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises.

Zionists, by definition, seek the lesser promises given by the Old Covenant, for they either reject the New Covenant or do not understand the difference between them. They cite the promise to Abraham, who was led to the land of Canaan, without realizing that God often speaks covertly in earthly terms while having something heavenly in mind. The writer of Hebrews understood this. In the end, because there were to be two covenants, the promises were fulfilled in two ways and at different times.

Donkeys and Sheep

When we study the heart condition of Israel during the time of Moses, it is clear that they were not yet ready to receive the better promises that God had in store for them. Their spiritual mother, after all, was Egypt, for [Hosea 11:1](#) says, “*out of Egypt I called My son.*” God was the Father in this case, while Egypt (Hagar) was their mother. This made fleshly Israel a type of *spiritual Ishmael*, a condition in which it was not possible to receive the promise. The angel had prophesied to Hagar herself in [Gen. 16:12](#) that her child would be a wild-donkey-man (*pereh awdawm*). By contrast, Israel was to be a sheep, that is, a clean animal.

After centuries of disobedience and rebellion, the prophet asks, “*Is Israel a slave?*” ([Jer. 2:14](#)). The implication is that Israel had a slave mentality, which is characteristic of Hagar and Ishmael ([Gal. 4:25](#)). Later, in [Jer. 2:24](#), the prophet calls Israel “*a wild donkey,*”

²⁴ **A wild donkey [pereh] accustomed to the wilderness, that sniffs the wind in her passion. In the time of her heat who can turn her away? All who seek her will not become weary; in her month they will find her.**

In other words, Israel was a wild donkey, or spiritual Ishmael, birthed out of Egypt. Israel's Father was not the problem. The problem was Israel's mother.

For this reason, Israel had to be redeemed by the Passover lamb in order to change from a donkey to a sheep, spiritually speaking. They did this by keeping Passover. One of the first laws given after they left Egypt—even before they were given the Ten Commandments—is found in [Exodus 13:11–13](#),

¹¹ Now it shall come about when the Lord brings you to the land of the Canaanite, as He swore to you and to your fathers, and gives it to you, ¹² that you shall devote to the Lord the first offspring of every womb, and the first offspring of every beast that you own; the males belong to the Lord. ¹³ But every first offspring of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb, but if you do not redeem it, then you shall break its neck; and every first-born of man among your sons you shall redeem.

All the first-born of clean animals needed no redemption. The reason the Israelites had to redeem their first-born sons with a lamb was because they were unclean donkeys, spiritually speaking. Only by redemption could these physical descendants of Abraham become the sheep of His pasture. This tells us that the physical seed of Abraham is no more than a spiritual Ishmaelite apart from being redeemed by the true Lamb of God.

In later years, they went through the ritual of redeeming their first-born sons with animals, but this did not change their hearts. Most of them remained spiritual donkeys. Even as the blood of bulls and goats could never remove sin, so also redemption rituals with lambs could not turn them into the sheep of His pasture.

Lawful Preparations

The Old Covenant, with its temporary laws of sacrifice and ritual, was not evil, but inadequate and temporary. It was made void by their disobedience ([Heb. 8:9](#)) and obsolete by the better covenant that Christ brought with Him ([Heb. 8:13](#)). The time of the Old Covenant was designed to discipline God's people and to bring them to maturity ([Gal. 4:1–5](#)).

Discipline seems evil (to the child), but it is actually good. Nonetheless, discipline ought not to last forever, nor, as adults, ought we to revert back to our stubborn days as children in need of further Old Covenant discipline. Those who cannot immigrate from the Old to the New Covenant remain as spiritual Ishmaelites that are yet in need of a lamb to redeem them.

So [Rev. 19:7](#) tells us that at the end of the age, “*His bride has made herself ready.*” A big part of her readiness is that she lives by the New Covenant, rather than the Old. She no longer identifies with Hagar, the slave-bride, but with Sarah, the free woman ([Gal. 4:26](#)). Christ's first marriage was to Israel, the slave-bride; but that marriage ended in divorce. He will not marry another Hagar. For this reason, when we speak of Israel being the bride, it is apparent that we do not mean fleshly Israel, for that would be a reinstatement of the old bride. Such a marriage could only end in divorce once again.

This second marriage will be to a Sarah bride, and she represents the New Covenant. Those who are part of this company are the overcomers—those who have truly been redeemed by the Lamb in their hearts by an inward work of the Holy Spirit, rather than by external rituals of cleansing or external changes of behavior.

Chapter 17: New Clothes for the Bride

In [Rev. 19:7](#) the bride is not “ready” until the end of the age, for she prepares herself until the time of the marriage. The bride in this case is a collection of overcomers that are taken from each generation from the beginning of time, so the preparation is long.

[Revelation 19:8](#) says,

⁸ And it was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

Under the Old Covenant, the priestly clothing was fine linen, for this was a type of right behavior that expressed a heart that was right with God. Physical clothing, being external, speaks of behavior (or “acts”), so it is “*the righteous acts of the saints*.”

Those martyrs under the altar, who were killed for their testimony in [Rev. 6:9–11](#), were given white robes, but they yet had to wait until the end of the age until others like them had been killed. In other words, more overcomers yet had to be born, to live, to bear witness, and to die in order to make up the complete body of overcomers. That body of overcomers, then, could not be complete until the end of the age when the bride is finally ready. Then the complete bride is given the new clothing in order to prepare for the marriage.

These New Covenant clothes represent our glorified bodies, which are given at the fulfillment of the feast of Tabernacles. Under the Old Covenant, the Israelites left their homes or tents and built booths for themselves in order to contemplate the law of God for a whole week. The booths were made of living branches ([Lev. 23:39, 40](#)) to signify being clothed with immortality. This is the promise given to us.

The Apostle Paul comments on this law in [2 Cor. 5:1–4](#), saying,

¹ For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. ² For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven; ³ inasmuch as we, having put it on, shall not be found naked. ⁴ For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed, but to be clothed, in order that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

This is Paul’s commentary on the feast of Tabernacles. Those who receive the glorified body are those who are clothed with a heavenly dwelling (body, or house). These are the ones who fulfill the feast of Tabernacles at the appointed time. Those individuals who fulfill this feast are part of the bride company that will be married to Christ at the end of the present age.

As we will see later when we study Revelation 20, a resurrection must occur first, in order to bring to life all of the overcomers from past ages, gathering them as one body at the end of the age.

The Marriage Supper

[Rev. 19:9](#) concludes this section about the bride, saying,

⁹ And he said to me, “Write, ‘Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb’.” And he said to me, “These are the true words of God.”

The New Testament has much to say about the privilege of being invited to the wedding. In [Matt. 22:2–14](#) Jesus told a parable about the “wedding feast,” saying,

² The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king, who gave a wedding feast for his son. ³ And he sent out his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding feast, and they were unwilling to come... ⁵ But they paid no attention and went their way, one to his own farm, another to his business, ⁶ and the rest seized his slaves and mistreated them and killed them. ⁷ But the king was enraged and sent his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and set their city on fire.

This parable was directed at the Judeans who were the first to receive the invitation, but who refused to come. Worse yet, they mistreated and killed the prophets who had been sent with the invitation. Although this particular parable does not mention the fact that they also killed the son himself (as in [Matt. 21:39](#)), it is clear that Jesus was giving the reasons for Jerusalem's destruction. In this case, "his armies" were the Roman armies, sent by the king (God), not so much because they rejected the invitation, but because they killed his servants, the prophets.

The parable then continues in [Matt. 22:8–10](#),

⁸ Then he said to his slaves, "The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. ⁹ Go therefore to the main highways, and as many as you find there, invite to the wedding feast." ¹⁰ And those slaves went out into the streets, and gathered together all they found, both evil and good; and the wedding hall was filled with dinner guests.

This is a broad picture of the invitation that was extended to everyone else (non-Judeans). Many of them, "*both evil and good*," accepted the invitation. This is a prophecy of the church that is filled with people who accepted the invitation, though some were "evil." [Matt. 22:11–14](#) continues,

¹¹ But when the king came in to look over the dinner guests, he saw there a man not dressed in wedding clothes, ¹² and he said to him, "Friend, how did you come in here without wedding clothes?" And he was speechless. ¹³ Then the king said to the servants, "Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." ¹⁴ For many are called [*kletos*, "invited"], but few are chosen [*eklektos*, "chosen, elected"].

The "evil" ones who came to the wedding were those who were "*not dressed in wedding clothes*." Even though they had accepted the invitation (wanting to follow Jesus Christ and give Him honor), they were rejected. Many have interpreted this to mean that they were not *real* Christians, and each denomination presents its own criteria as to how to be a real Christian. Certainly, there are many church members who are not real Christians. But the parable tells us that these were cast out *for not having appropriate wedding clothes*. This is how the parable is tied to [Rev. 19:8](#), for one must be clothed with spiritual "*fine linen, bright and clean*."

Those who are not clothed appropriately will be expelled. This shows that the time of the wedding feast is not the time for the restoration of all mankind. In fact, as we will see in Revelation 20, the first resurrection is limited to the overcomers, who, by definition, are properly clothed in fine linen. Some believers, then, will be expelled!

In other words, to attend this wedding feast, one must put on the glorified body by experiencing the feast of Tabernacles. The problem is that most Christians know little or nothing about this feast and are thus unprepared. They think the requirement is to accept the invitation as one of the "called," when, in fact, that is only the first step.

To accept the invitation is to experience Passover. To hear the word and grow to spiritual maturity through the Holy Spirit is to experience Pentecost. To receive the heavenly clothing, that is, the glorified body, is to experience Tabernacles.

Those who fail to come to the wedding feast, along with those who are cast out, will remain in "*outer darkness*," dressed in their mortal clothing until the general resurrection a thousand years later. They will not be consigned to "hell," nor will believers lose their salvation, but neither will they have the honor of ruling with Christ as immortals during the Tabernacles Age in the Kingdom.

The message to the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3 admonishes the believers themselves to “overcome.” These are the *eklektos*, the chosen ones, in Jesus’ parable. Those who overcome are to be rewarded; those who do not overcome will have to wait until later.

Chapter 18: The Spirit of Prophecy

[Rev. 19:9](#) says, “... and he said to me, ‘*These are the true words of God*’.” What does he mean?

The Fellow Servant

In order to understand this, we must first ask ourselves who is the “he” that is speaking? The best clue comes in the next verse. [Rev. 19:10](#) says,

¹⁰ And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said to me, “Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and your brethren who hold the testimony of Jesus; worship God. For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”

This may come as a surprise to those reading John’s narrative. It also appears that John himself was surprised. The glory that was in this “fellow servant” gave him the appearance of Jesus. In fact, this glorified man is the source of the voice from the throne in [Rev. 19:5](#), which we have already identified as that of Jesus. But it is more than Jesus Himself as a single Being. It is the voice of Jesus which is spoken by a representative of His body.

It is the same voice which said “*Give praise to our God, all you His bond-servants*” ([Rev. 19:5](#)). Hence, when John tries to worship him, he redirects the worship to God, telling John that he is just “*a fellow servant*,” that is, a fellow bond-servant. In [Rev. 3:21](#), we read,

²¹ He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

The promise is given to the overcomers that they will sit down with Christ on His throne. Therefore, this “fellow servant” is an overcomer, and his voice is said to be coming from the throne. Christ and His body are inseparable, spiritually speaking, because they are in agreement.

The Voice of the Arnion

This is one of the clearest pictures of the *arnion* in the book of Revelation. The *arnion* are the little lambs who are fed with the word of God ([John 21:15](#)) until they have come into full agreement with Him. They have become that which they have eaten.

This, I believe, is the spiritual force behind the overcomer’s statement: “*These are the true words of God*.” In order for the overcomer to be able to speak from the throne on behalf of all the overcomers that are seated with Christ, he must first eat those words, even as John did in [Rev. 10:10](#). The purpose of creation was to bring forth sons of God who would be in agreement with their heavenly Father. The introduction of sin created a problem for God to overcome. But the time of creation is not finished until the reconciliation of all things is accomplished and all of creation sings in four-part harmony.

The Spirit of Prophecy

In [Rev. 19:10](#), the overcomer tells John, “*I am a fellow servant of yours and your brethren who hold the testimony of Jesus... For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.*”

Not only this overcomer, but all of his brethren “*hold the testimony of Jesus*,” which “*is the spirit of prophecy*.” The Greek word for “testimony” is *martyria*, signifying testimony before the Judge of the whole earth. Such testimony is the whole truth and nothing but the truth. In other words, this testimony sets forth “*the true words of God*.”

What words? What truth? It all began in [Rev. 1:2](#), as John “*bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ.*” A few verses later, in [Rev. 1:9](#), John said that he “*was on the island called Patmos, because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.*” Later, in [Rev. 12:17](#) the dragon declared war on the saints—those “*who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.*” Finally, in [Rev. 20:4](#) we see that those raised in the first resurrection are those who were executed “*because of the testimony of Jesus.*”

This phrase can mean either that the testimony is being spoken by Jesus Himself, or that it is a testimony concerning Jesus. In a way, it is both, because the true word originates in Jesus Himself, who is called “*the word of God*” ([Rev. 19:13](#)); yet this “word” is also spoken by His body of overcomers, those who have eaten His words, who bear witness of Him, and who agree with His words.

Any time we agree with the words of God, such “testimony” is “*the spirit of prophecy*.” By contrast, any word that runs contrary to the testimony of Jesus is NOT a true spirit of prophecy. In order to live by the spirit of prophecy, one must eat the word and assimilate it by meditation until it is changed from doctrine to revelation.

It has been said that Jesus is the *Word* of God, and we are the *words* of God. There is much truth in this. In my view, angels carrying specific words (inherent in the name of each angel) represent portions of the full revelation of the word that is in Christ Jesus. Those angels are sent to us as “*ministering spirits*” ([Heb. 1:14](#)) to imprint that word on our hearts and in our nature. Each of us is only a portion of the word, but as members of the body of Christ, we collectively hold the full word of God that is in our Head. This Head-and-body combination is the lamb, the *arnion*, in the book of Revelation.

It is important, then, to eat the word, because we become what we eat. As we assimilate the word that is in each angel assigned to us, we become the living word and the particular expression of the testimony of Jesus that is unique to each person. Many are called, or invited, but those who are chosen—the remnant of grace—will actually participate in the wedding feast, where Christ the Head is joined to the full body at the appointed feast of Tabernacles.

Chapter 19: The True Word on a White Horse

The testimony of Jesus in [Rev. 19:10](#) is defined more specifically in the next verses. [Rev. 19:11](#) says,

¹¹ And I saw heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True; and in righteousness He judges and wages war.

Although this is written in Greek, the thought patterns are Hebrew. The verse begins with “and” (Greek, *kai*), and this is a common Hebrew way of beginning a sentence to link one thought to another. Thus, “and” links the testimony of Jesus to the heaven being opened for the return of Christ. It is as if a door opens in heaven so that the Rider on the white horse may pass from the invisible dimension to the visible.

The One sitting on this white horse is Jesus Christ Himself. The white horse is symbolic. It was never meant to be taken literally, as if Jesus is coming to earth on a flying horse. Certainly, if He wants to do so, who am I to forbid it? But like so much symbolism in the book of Revelation, this horse is a direct reference to a constellation called *Pegasus*, “the chief horse.” Its brightest star is *Markab*, (or *Merhak* in Hebrew), which means “returning from afar.”

All of the constellations, as they were originally named by God, are prophecies of Christ and reveal the divine plan of redemption for the world. Men later twisted the meanings and used the stars for unlawful purposes, and that corrupted form is now called Astrology. But God is the One who named the stars and constellations in the beginning. [Psalm 147:4](#) says,

⁴ He counts the number of the stars; He gives names to all of them.

In the Bible, the horse was a symbol of salvation. This is because horses were so important to an army in time of war. They often “saved the day” for the foot soldiers. But God gave instructions to Israel—and specifically to the kings—that they were not to place their trust in horses. In God’s instruction to kings, we read in [Deut. 17:16](#),

¹⁶ Moreover, he shall not multiply horses for himself, nor shall he cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, since the Lord has said to you, ‘You shall never again return that way.’

Egypt was well known for its horses. [Isaiah 31:1–3](#) makes mention of this as well, saying,

¹ Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help, and rely on horses, and trust in chariots because they are many, and in horsemen because they are very strong, but they do not look to the Holy One of Israel, nor seek the Lord ... ³ Now the Egyptians are men, and not God, and their horses are flesh and not spirit.

In other words, God is their salvation—not horses from Egypt. If we rely upon carnal weapons of warfare, we will find ourselves “returning to Egypt.” That is, arms races will actually bring us back into bondage, not freedom. We are seeing this even now, for the more we wage war around the world, the more we lose our freedoms.

Jesus is our Salvation. He is the true “Horse.” Jesus’ Hebrew name, *Yeshua*, means “salvation.” His Greek name, *Iesus*, or *Iesous*, is simply a transliteration of the Hebrew **Yah-Sus**. *Yah* is short for *Yahweh*. *Sus* is the Hebrew word for *Horse*.

In other words, **Yah-Sus** literally means “Yah’s Horse,” which symbolically means “Yahweh’s Salvation.” (About 200 years ago the English language created the letter “J” to replace many of the “I” sounds. This is how we came to change the spelling of *Iesus* to **Jesus**.)

When Jesus said in [John 4:22](#), “salvation is from the Jews,” a better rendering of this is: “*Yeshua is from the Judeans*,” that is, Jesus comes from the tribe of Judah. Jesus was identifying himself to the Samaritan woman as the source of Salvation that was to come out of Judah.

Faithful and True

In the message to the church of Laodicea, we read in [Rev. 3:14](#),

¹⁴ And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: “The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God says this...”

[Rev. 19:11](#) bears witness to this, calling the Rider of the white horse “*faithful and true*.” No doubt we are to understand this as a reference to Christ as *a witness of the true words of God*, from [Rev. 19:9](#). The Greek word translated “true” is *alethinos*, which means genuine, real, the opposite of a counterfeit, a simulation, or a pretense. The root word is *alethes*, “loving the truth,” and which literally means not hidden, or not concealed. It is the truth unveiled and seen clearly for what it is.

When the voice from the throne said in [Rev. 19:9](#), “*These are the true words of God*,” he was setting us up for the coming of the Rider who “*is called Faithful and True*.” A few verses later, in [Rev. 19:13](#), we read further that “*His name is called The Word of God*.” Hence, the emphasis in this passage is not only the return of Christ, but more specifically, Christ as the true Word of God, bearing the nature of the Father as His Prime Witness on earth.

[Heb. 1:3](#) tells us of Jesus: “*He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature*.” Hence, when Philip asked Jesus to “*show us the Father*,” we read Jesus’ answer in [John 14:9](#), “*He who has seen Me has seen the Father*.” He is the Word of God unveiled to mankind.

The Greek words *alethinos* and *alethes* are the words that the rabbis chose to translate the Hebrew word *amen*, which means “firm, faithful, truly.” It is the Hebrew word for faith and truth, and these two concepts are inseparable. In other words, to have genuine *faith*, one must believe the *truth* that God has presented to us through Jesus Christ’s witness. We must also be faithful to that truth, bearing witness to it in our own testimony. In this way we too can become true and faithful witnesses of the nature of our heavenly Father.

The Judge

[Rev. 19:11](#) also says, “*and in righteousness He judges and wages war*.” What type of war? How does He judge? These questions are not answered here, so we must go to other parts of Scripture for answers.

We often use the word “judge” as if it is synonymous with “condemnation,” simply because men generally condemn when they judge others. But these words are not the same. It is possible to judge without condemning. To judge is to discern truth. [John 5:22](#) says,

²² For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son.

This is truly an amazing statement that most people have not understood. The Father does not judge anyone! All judgment is delegated to the Son. Why? Upon what law is this based? [John 5:26](#) and [27](#) says,

²⁶ For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; ²⁷ and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man.

Here is the answer. The Son was given the authority to judge, “*because He is the Son of Man*.” The word “man” is simply the definition of the Old Testament name, Adam. Jesus is the “last Adam” ([1 Cor. 15:45](#)). Jesus had to be born of Adamic lineage in order to receive the original dominion mandate given in [Genesis 1:26](#). The highest position, called the Birthright, was passed down from father to son through the generations coming to David and finally to Jesus Christ Himself. The title, “Son of Man” is given in part *because of His lineage through Mary back to Adam*, but also because Joseph had adopted Him.

In other words, when God gave Adam the dominion mandate in [Gen. 1:26](#), *God was giving man authority to judge*. And the Judge of the highest court in the Universe is Jesus Christ Himself. Final judgment has been given to Him, because He is the Son of Adam, the Heir of the dominion mandate.

Even so, He is not the only one called to judge the world. He is the highest Judge sitting on the Supreme Court of Heaven, but there are also lesser judges who judge with the mind of Christ. Paul says in [1 Cor. 6:2](#), “*or do you not know that the saints will judge the world?*” In the next verse, he asks, “*Do you not know that we shall judge angels?*”

Some people, of course, rub their hands with glee, because they think this means that they will soon have opportunity to condemn those who have wronged them. But Jesus taught us by example how to judge. [John 5:30](#),

³⁰ I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

The judges of all lower courts must abide by the mind and will of the higher court, or else they will be overruled and be ashamed. Jesus, who was the Amen of God, judged all things by the mind of His Father. Likewise, we too are to judge by the mind of Christ. This requires more than a mere knowledge of the law. It requires revelation to know how to apply it specifically. This is impossible for the carnal mind to do. The carnal mind can hear evidence, but only the mind of the Spirit can discern truth from lies and half-truths. Only the mind of the Spirit knows all things.

Divine judgment, like all things coming from God, is based upon Love. That simple principle is hard for the carnal mind of man to grasp. How can judgment proceed from Love? It has to do with the ultimate purpose of all judgment. God’s purpose is to correct and restore, not to condemn and to cast out permanently.

This has always been the divine purpose, for as Paul says in [Rom. 13:10](#), “*love is the fulfillment of the law.*” Love and law are not at cross-purposes. In reality, they are one and the same, because they have the same Source. God is love, and the law is the revelation of His divine nature. When we are fully transformed into the image of God, we too will possess His love-nature and do all things in conformity to His law.

This is the Mind by which both the *Amnos* and the *arnion* company will judge righteously.

The Sword of Righteous War

Likewise, it is by this principle of Love that war is waged. Paul says in [2 Cor. 10:3–6](#),

³ For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, ⁴ for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. ⁵ We are destroying speculations [*logismos*, “thoughts, or fleshly reasoning that seems logical to the carnal mind”] and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, ⁶ and we are ready to punish [*ekdikeo*, “that which proceeds from justice”] all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete.

Paul tells us that we are to wage war, but he makes it clear that we are not to wage the type of warfare as men and nations do. Our warfare is not against people, but against those spiritual forces that keep people in bondage. Our warfare is not even against “the wicked,” but against the spiritual forces that make them wicked—so that they can be set free in Christ.

In other words, our warfare is not destructive. It is constructive. Our armor is not carnal either. According to [Eph. 6:11–17](#), we conduct warfare dressed in spiritual armor. This is the only type of armor that can defend against the real “enemy” in verse 12,

¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in heavenly places.

This is what God is teaching us even today. We are learning the art of spiritual warfare, so that we banish from our minds the idea that we are supposed to use carnal weapons against flesh-and-blood people.

And so when [Rev. 19:11](#) speaks of waging war in a righteous manner, it is not referring to Christ coming to “slaughter enemies,” as has been so often taught. In fact, if we may skip down to verse 15, we can see the type of weapon that is to be used against His enemies.

¹⁵ And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may smite the nations ...

Once again, people have carnalized this sword in order to make it destructive. If it were a carnal sword, John would have seen it in His hand, rather than in His mouth. But in [Rev. 1:16](#) we read,

¹⁶ And in His right hand He held seven stars; and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength.

In an Old Testament setting, a two-edged sword was a destructive weapon that could divide someone’s head from his body. But the New Testament weapon is described differently in [Heb. 4:12](#),

¹² For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intents of the heart. ¹³ And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

The sword is the spoken word of God. That is why it comes from the mouth, not from the hand. And this is confirmed in [Eph. 6:17](#), where Paul says,

¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

This sharp sword is able to divide soul and spirit and can “*judge [discern] the thoughts and intents of the heart.*” It is much sharper and more effective than a physical sword. To the one who has such a sword, “*all things are open and laid bare.*” In other words, all the facts are uncovered and known fully in every case that comes before the heavenly Judge. This sword gives us the spirit of discernment.

When Israel came to Mount Sinai for their first Pentecost, they refused to hear the word of God ([Exodus 20:18–21](#)). They did not realize that they were refusing to receive the Sword of the Spirit. They were thus left only with a carnal sword.

Thus, when they later worshiped the golden calf, the penalty was executed by physical swords, which was all that the Levites had at their disposal. On that day, 3000 died and were subtracted from the Church in the wilderness ([Exodus 32:28](#)).

In Acts 2, however, the 120 disciples gathered in the upper room to receive the Sword of the Spirit. Then they went out into the street, using the sword from their mouth, and ADDED 3,000 to the Church ([Acts 2:41](#)).

They used a spiritual sword that laid bare the hearts of the people, and the people repented according to the word of Peter ([Acts 2:38](#)).

This is the type of sword that the rider of the white horse is going to wield. It is the Sword of the Spirit, which Jesus uses, and that same Sword is used by the company of overcomers that form His body. By this sword, they will judge and wage war.

The results will be awesome.

Eyes of Fire

[Revelation 19:12](#) says,

¹² And His eyes are a flame of fire, and upon His head are many diadems; and He has a name written upon Him which no one knows except Himself.

Eyes are said to be the windows of the soul. The One seated on the white horse has eyes that “*are a flame of fire.*” Fire represents God Himself and is meant to portray His nature. When God appeared to the people at Mount Sinai to give them the Ten Commandments, He appeared only as fire.

Eyes of Fire

[Deuteronomy 5:4](#), [5](#) says,

⁴ The Lord spoke to you face to face at the mountain from the midst of the fire, ⁵ while I was standing between the Lord and you at that time, to declare to you the word of the Lord; for you were afraid because of the fire and did not go up the mountain ...

Israel was called “*up the mountain,*” but they were too afraid of God and thought that hearing His voice would kill them ([Exodus 20:19](#)). The fire of God would not have killed them physically, of course, but the righteous nature of God certainly would have killed their Adamic “flesh,” or what Paul called the “old man” ([Rom. 6:6](#); [Eph. 4:22 KJV](#)). By protecting the “old man,” Israel was not able to enter into the New Covenant and had to settle for a lesser covenant, which we call the Old Covenant.

Moses also tells us in [Deut. 4:12](#),

¹² Then the Lord spoke to you from the midst of the fire; you heard the sound of words, but you saw no form—only a voice.

So we see that in Revelation 19, Jesus Christ comes as the living Word. Whereas Israel heard only a voice, but saw no form, Jesus Christ was the Word ([John 1:1](#)) that came down from heaven, taking the form of the Son of Man so that we might overcome our fear of fire.

The Word made flesh, then, is pictured in [Rev. 19:12](#) coming on a white horse, having eyes of fire. The eyes reveal His nature, though His body cloaks that nature in human form.

Many Diadems

[Rev. 19:12](#) tells us that “*upon His head are many diadems,*” or *diadema* in Greek. This is not a *stephanos*, which is “a victor’s wreath,” but a kingly ornament. He wears not just one, but many, because He “*is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron*” ([Rev. 12:5](#)).

These diadems had been worn previously by the red dragon ([Rev. 12:3](#)) and by the beast from the sea ([Rev. 13:1](#)). However, once they are overthrown, their diadems are taken from them and given to the rightful Heir of all nations, the “*King of Kings, and Lord of Lords*” ([Rev. 19:16](#)).

The Unknown Name

[Rev. 19:12](#) says, “*and He has a name written upon Him which no one knows except Himself.*” The phrase “upon Him” is not in the original and is only the opinion of the NASB translator. Other versions do not share that opinion:

“*He had a name written that no man knew, but He Himself*” (KJV).

“having a Name written which no one knows except himself” (The Emphatic Diaglott).

“having names written of which no one except Himself is aware” (The Concordant Version).

So the first question is this: Where is this name written? Is it written “upon Him,” that is, upon His clothing or perhaps even upon His body as a heavenly tattoo? Or is the name written on the diadems that He wears on His head? If we use the Concordant Version, which uses the plural (“names”), we could read the verse to say, “*upon His head are many diadems, having names written (on them) which no one but He knows.*”

Perhaps these are the identities of the various nations written on the diadems. Perhaps these are new names for those nations, which reflect their true callings as Kingdom nations.

On the other hand, if this is a single name, and if it is meant to identify the Word riding on the white horse, we have to ask ourselves why it was such a secret. The name of Jesus is well known, as well as the Hebrew form of His name, Yeshua. It may be that the secret name is a reference to YHVH, the name revealed to Moses ([Exodus 6:2, 3](#)), whose pronunciation was lost in later years, because the people refused to speak that name for fear of taking His name in vain.

If this is the case, then Jesus Himself would be identified by the name of YHVH, thus fulfilling the prophecy of [Isaiah 12:2](#), “*for YAH YHVH is my strength and song, and He has become my Yeshua.*”

In the end, one’s view of the name itself probably depends upon the place where it is written. If it is written on the diadems, it probably identifies the nations in some way; but if it is written on the Word Himself, or on His robe, it would surely identify Himself. It is hard to know for certain the meaning of this verse.

Yet we may find a clue in the next verse. [Revelation 19:13](#) says,

¹³ And He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood; and His name is called The Word of God.

Here we see the Rider identified BY NAME—“*The Word of God*”—immediately after telling us about the unknown name(s) in the previous verse. The clear implication is that “*The Word of God*” is not the same as the secret name from verse 12. Otherwise, there would be no point in keeping the name secret. This probably indicates that the secret name is not the name of the Rider, but is the name (or names) on the diadems.

The Robe

His “*robe dipped in blood*” is a reference to Joseph’s robe, which was dipped in blood. [Gen. 37:31](#) says,

³¹ So they took Joseph’s tunic, and slaughtered a male goat, and dipped the tunic in the blood.

The second coming of Christ is based on the Joseph pattern, whereas His first coming was based on the pattern of Judah. Christ came the first time of the tribe of Judah ([Heb. 7:14](#)), because the scepter had been given to Judah, and later to David, who was of Judah. Hence, it was necessary for Him to come as a descendant of Judah and David to receive the Dominion Mandate ([Gen. 1:26](#)) that was promised to Judah in [Gen. 49:10](#).

However, Joseph had been given the birthright ([1 Chron. 5:1, 2](#)), because Jacob had divided up the blessing between his sons. The divided kingdom separated the scepter from the birthright after the death of Solomon, and this breach had to be repaired through Christ. So [Hosea 1:11](#) says,

¹¹ And the sons of Judah and the sons of Israel [including the tribes of Joseph] will be gathered together, and they will appoint themselves one Leader

Likewise, [Ezekiel 37:19](#) says,

¹⁹ Say to them, “Thus says the Lord God, ‘Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel, his companions; and I will put them with it, with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they will be one in My hand’.”

By reuniting Judah with Joseph in the hand of Christ, the full blessing of the scepter and the birthright are united under one Head. This repair of the breach can only take place through the Messiah, and it is the main reason He must come twice.

In His first coming to claim His scepter and throne, the priestly leaders in Jerusalem opposed Him and induced the people to reject His claim. Nonetheless, He did the prophetic work that was required of the Messiah, and then ascended, in part, to file an appeal in the heavenly court and then return after winning His case ([Luke 19:12](#)).

In the second coming, Jesus Christ claims His birthright, which is the Fruitfulness Mandate to “*be fruitful and multiply*” ([Gen. 1:28](#)). This Mandate is the right to bring forth the sons of God. So Jacob’s blessing upon Joseph says, “*Joseph is a fruitful bough*” [*ben*, “son”]. It would take a second coming to claim this birthright, and also to unite it with the scepter of Judah, thus reuniting the two sticks of Judah and Joseph and repairing the great breach in the Kingdom.

When this occurs, Christ then has the lawful right to be fruitful and multiply children in His image. This is the basis of the Sonship message and “*the manifestation of the sons of God*” ([Rom. 8:19, KJV](#)).

Therefore, when [Rev. 19:13](#) identifies the Word of God as having His robe dipped in blood, we are being told that He is coming as “Joseph” to claim the birthright and unite it with the scepter of Judah which He has won by divine decree in the heavenly court.

The two comings of Christ are also prophesied in [Lev. 14:1–7](#) in the law of the healing of leprosy. Leprosy is a type of mortality (a slow death), and this particular law prophesies to us the path to immortality. It takes two birds to cleanse lepers ([Lev. 14:4](#)). The first was to be killed, and the second was to be dipped in the blood of the first bird and released into the open field ([Lev. 14:6, 7](#)).

Both birds prophesy of Jesus Christ, the first setting forth His death, and the other showing how He must be released into “*the open field*” (that is, the world—[Matt. 13:38](#)). In other words, Christ must come a second time, having been “*dipped in blood*” in order to complete the work of bringing the sons of God into immortality. Without this second work of Christ, the sons of God might be able to rule under the Dominion Mandate, but they would remain mortal. We know that God does not intend for His sons to remain mortal.

[Rev. 19:13](#) shows the fulfillment of the second bird being released into the open field. It is Christ coming into the world to do a living work, unlike His first coming, when He came as the prophetic bird that was to be killed in an earthen vessel (body). The purpose of His second coming is to claim the birthright of Joseph, so that the sons of God can be manifested and be made immortal, giving them the ability to rule the earth during the Tabernacles Age and beyond.

The White Horse Company

[Revelation 19:14](#) says,

¹⁴ And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses.

These armies picture a heavenly invasion of the earth, running parallel to the armies of Israel that invaded Canaan under the leadership of Joshua. The main difference, of course, is seen in the next verse, “*and from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may smite the nations.*” In other words, this is a New Covenant invasion, using New Covenant weapons. These weapons, Paul tells us in [2 Cor. 10:4](#), “*are not of the flesh.*” Instead of killing people, these weapons take “*every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.*”

Jesus Christ is called “*the word of God*” in [Rev. 19:13](#). He is the same *Logos* (“word”) that John wrote about in his gospel ([John 1:1](#)). He is the Joshua (Yeshua) of the New Covenant who is leading this invasion; but more than that, He is also the *memrah*—the Hebrew word for *Logos*. Jewish belief taught that the *memrah* was one who was so righteous that he had become the embodiment of the word itself. He was the word made flesh. For more on this concept, see [Dr. Luke: Repairing the Breaches, Book 1, chapter 16](#).

The angel spoke of more than one “word,” for in [Rev. 19:9](#) he said, “*These are the true words of God.*” These “*true words*” are those dressed in fine linen who follow their Leader on white horses. They are dressed in the same spiritual clothing given to the true bride earlier in [Rev. 19:7, 8](#). From this, we are to understand that the armies from heaven are also the bride—that is, those who are in unity and agreement with Christ. Hence, they ride on white horses to identify them with the “Chief Horse” (*Pega-sus*) which is “Yah’s Horse” (*Je-sus*).

The same sword of the Spirit that comes from the mouth of Christ also comes out of the mouths of the bride/army. The spiritual weaponry of this heavenly invasion is prominent in this description. Though the metaphor of carnal warfare is used, we are not meant to think of this invasion in carnal terms, nor does this war result in carnage. It is important to understand this, given the *apparent* carnage pictured in the rest of the chapter.

Chapter 20: Smiting the Nations

[Revelation 19:15](#) says,

¹⁵ And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may smite the nations; and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty.

The first obvious fact to consider in this verse is that if Christ had smitten the nations in a carnal manner, they would all be dead. How, then, could He “*rule them with a rod of iron*?” Some might say that He will rule over the *survivors*. Those same people, however, are fond of telling us that Christ’s coming is a deadline, after which no man can be saved. Will He then rule unbelievers who are locked into their faithless mindset? Will He use His “*rod of iron*” in a tyrannical manner, enslaving those who hate Him and forcing obedience from all who disagree with His law?

Not at all. The “rod” is His scepter, a symbol of the right to rule. It is not a rod that is used to beat the disobedient ones. An iron rod is not a painful stick that might break their bones; it is an unbreakable scepter. An overthrown king has a broken scepter, but Christ carries a “*rod of iron*.” He has laid claim to the scepter of a Kingdom that will not pass away, that cannot be broken, and that can never again be usurped.

The Divine Sentence on Jerusalem

Recall from Jesus’ parable in [Luke 19:12](#) that He was to go “*to a distant country*” (i.e., heaven) “*to receive a kingdom for Himself, and then return.*” In the parable, the “*citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, ‘We do not want this man to reign over us’.*” This parable described the conflict between Jesus and the chief rulers (priests) in Jerusalem. They rejected His right to rule and appealed to the heavenly court, begging God not to let Jesus be the heir to the throne.

The interim between the two comings of Christ was the time allotted for this court case to be settled. In the end, however, the nobleman was to “return,” and after giving rewards to His supporters, [Luke 19:27](#), [28](#) gives us the conclusion to the matter,

²⁷ But these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slay them in my presence. ²⁸ And after He had said these things, He was going on ahead, ascending to Jerusalem.

It is clear that Jesus was speaking of the Jewish rulers in Jerusalem when He sentences them to death. But the command to “*bring them here*” suggests that they were *not here* until they were brought to Jerusalem. It suggests that the underlying purpose of modern Zionism is for God to bring a representative group back to the old land for sentencing at the scene of the crime. These would be the representatives today of those who rejected Christ and usurped His throne many years ago. As for the judgment itself, [Jer. 19:10](#), [11](#) tells us that Jerusalem and its inhabitants is to be destroyed in such a way that it will never again be repaired (rebuilt).

Likewise, Paul, who identifies the earthly Jerusalem as Hagar, and its citizens as the children of the flesh ([Gal. 4:25](#), [29](#)) must be “*cast out*,” for they cannot be heirs with the Isaac company, “*the son of the freewoman*” ([Gal. 4:30](#)).

This prophecy, however, is not referenced directly in Revelation 19. John gives us a picture of Christ returning to the earth, but not specifically to Jerusalem. Yet from many other prophecies it is clear that Jerusalem is the place of divine judgment at His second coming. Most modern teachers tell us that He will come to *save* Jerusalem and its Jewish inhabitants, but in fact He comes to Jerusalem to “*slay them in My presence*” ([Luke 19:27](#)). His enemies are not Arabs or Russians or Chinese troops, but those Jewish leaders and their supporters “*who did not want Me to reign over them.*”

How will Christ accomplish this? The overall purpose of the sword coming from His mouth is to convert men, rather than to kill them. But this spiritual sword is also the judgment decreed by the spoken word. What, then, will actually

happen? In my view, the destruction of Jerusalem will surely involve the deaths of many people—particularly those who continue to oppose Christ’s right to reign over them, those who usurped the scepter in His first appearance.

Some may repent at the last minute, even as some have repented over the centuries, but this will not prevent the destruction of Jerusalem. Individuals who repent could be divinely protected during this time of destruction, or perhaps they might be led to leave Jerusalem, even as the early Church left the city before it was destroyed in 70 A.D. The real solution will be to evacuate the city before its destruction, because Christ will not save the city at the last minute in order to make it His capital city.

While the city itself will be destroyed, it appears that a third of its inhabitants will repent and be spared ([Zech. 13:8, 9](#)).

Judged by the Covenants

Whatever covenant a man claims, that is how he will be judged. Whoever claims to be under the Old Covenant will be judged in an Old Covenant manner. Whoever claims to be under the New Covenant will be judged in a New Covenant manner. Of New Covenant believers, Jesus says in [John 5:22–24](#),

²² For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son, ²³ in order that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. ²⁴ Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.

But to those Jews who rejected the Mediator of the New Covenant in order to continue following (so they think) the mediator of the Old Covenant, Jesus says in [John 5:45](#),

⁴⁵ Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father; the one who accuses you is Moses, in whom you have set your hope.

Jesus told them that Moses will accuse them, because they appealed to him and the covenant that he mediated. The problem was that they did not believe the words of Moses either, for he wrote of Jesus on virtually every page of the law. So Jesus continued in [John 5:46, 47](#),

⁴⁶ For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote of Me. ⁴⁷ But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?

It is clear, then, that the Jews will be judged by Moses, because they have appealed to him as their judge. Christians who are under the New Covenant will “*not come into judgment*,” and this includes any individual Jew that may repent even at the last minute. The gray area, of course, is seen with Christians who claim the New Covenant but who, in practice, live by the Old Covenant. Perhaps this is the type of believer who will be “*saved yet so as through fire*” ([1 Cor. 3:15](#)).

Getting back to our study in Revelation 19, the second coming of Christ brings judgment upon the earth. The manner of judgment will be according to each person’s level of knowledge and covenant (vow) that he claims before the judge to whom he appeals.

The verdict from the divine court will also depend upon each person’s identity when each identifies himself in court. Those who claim fleshly identity as a son of the old Adam or of fleshly Israel will be judged according to the Old Covenant standard, which regulates fleshly behavior. He who claims spiritual identity, one that has been begotten by the Spirit, will not be judged, for he is a New Creation that is sinless ([1 John 3:9](#), literal translation).

In [Rev. 19:15](#) John pictures the nations being judged in a metaphorical wine press. The nations are thus pictured as grapes that are trodden down in the wine press in order to extract the new wine for God’s great Communion Table.

These “grapes” differ from barley (which is winnowed) and wheat (which is threshed). Yet all three forms of divine judgment are designed to remove the flesh and to extract the bread from the grain and new wine from the grapes.

The “*fierce wrath of God*,” as we have already shown, is His passion, or “heat,” which comes from His nature. God is love ([1 John 4:8](#)), and God is also “jealous” ([Exodus 34:14](#)). The Hebrew word translated “jealous” is *kanna*, from the root word *kana*, “to be zealous.” Jealousy is a negative manifestation of being zealous, but the primary meaning of the word is not about jealousy.

In [John 2:2](#) we read that Jesus attended a marriage feast at *Cana*. In John’s explanation of this miracle, he tells how Jesus cleansed the temple ([John 2:13–16](#)). The next verse (17) says,

¹⁷ His disciples remembered that it was written, “Zeal for Thy house will consume Me.”

In other words, the disciples recalled [Psalm 69:9](#), where “zeal” is from the Hebrew word *kina*, whose root word is *kana*, or *cana*. The point of John’s account is to show how Christ’s passionate zeal for His Father’s house had estranged Him from His brethren ([Psalm 69:8](#)).

At the marriage feast in Cana, Jesus changed the water to wine to portray the atomic change that is coming in our bodies. The water was in six stone waterpots ([John 2:6](#)). The number six is the number of man, so we are the waterpots being changed into His image. He is zealous and passionate about doing this. He will not stop until He has fulfilled that passion.

The story of Jesus cleansing the temple is another side to this story, for we are also the temple of God that needs to be cleansed before our bodies can be glorified. Changing the water to wine is the equivalent of casting out the love of money from our hearts, so that our temples no longer portray a den of thieves.

Cana is also the root of *Canaanite*, which means “merchant, banker, or lowlander.” [Zech. 14:21](#) prophesies, “*there will no longer be a Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts in that day.*” Hence, Jesus cast out the bankers, i.e., *Canaanites*, shouting, “*Stop making My Father’s house a house of merchandise!*” ([John 2:16](#)).

All of His judgments are extensions of His nature and are designed to win the love of His creation. His passionate love and zealotry is unrelenting and will not cease until every temple has been cleansed, every waterpot filled with new wine, and all of creation has been reconciled to Him. When all are finally in agreement with Him, and He has no more “enemies” fighting Him, then death itself will be abolished ([1 Cor. 15:26](#)), and God will be “*all in all*” ([1 Cor. 15:28](#)).

Then will come to pass the word written on His robe in [Rev. 19:16](#),

¹⁶ And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, “KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”

He will be King over all that He has created, for He has vowed to make all of mankind His people. He has taken this responsibility upon Himself to turn the hearts of all enemies and sinners, so that they will indeed acknowledge Him as the Heir of the world.

Chapter 21: The Peace Angel

[Revelation 19:17, 18](#) says,

¹⁷ And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried out with a loud voice, saying to all the birds which fly in midheaven, “Come, assemble for the great supper of God; ¹⁸ in order that you may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of commanders and the flesh of mighty men and the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them and the flesh of all men, both free men and slaves, and small and great.”

The heavenly invasion is conducted according to the righteous mind and nature of God. For this reason, He invades the earth according to the laws of war that are found in Deuteronomy 20. One of those important laws is found in [Deut. 20:10–12](#),

¹⁰ When you approach a city to fight against it, you shall offer it terms of peace. ¹¹ And it shall come about, if it agrees to make peace with you and opens to you, then it shall be that all the people who are found in it shall become your forced labor and shall serve you. ¹² However, if it does not make peace with you, but makes war against you, then you shall besiege it.

The divine law does not allow for an ambush without warning or negotiation. This is because the law of God considers war to be an enforcement of the decrees from the divine court. No man is judged without a hearing ([John 7:51](#)). War is righteous only when guilt has been determined properly and when the offending nation has refused to comply with the divine verdict. When men or nations refuse to comply with His decrees, it is contempt of court, which calls for the death penalty. This law is found in [Deut. 17:8–13](#). Verse 12 says,

¹² And the man who acts presumptuously by not listening to the priest who stands there to serve the Lord your God, nor to the judge, that man shall die; thus you shall purge the evil from Israel.

The heavenly invasion of the earth in Revelation 19 presumes that the divine court case has already been filed properly and that God has already ruled in favor of the saints and against Babylon. Babylon’s authorized time to rule the earth has ended, but, as [Jer. 50:33](#) prophesies, “*they have refused to let them go.*” For this reason, God musters the White Horse Company to invade and to take back His creation by whatever force is necessary.

Ambassadors of Peace

Before such a war takes place, an ambassador must be sent to “*offer it terms of peace.*” The ambassador in this case is the “*angel standing in the sun.*” My personal revelation says that this is the Peace Angel. Though he is first revealed declaring war, his name (nature) is peace. When I asked our heavenly Father for the name of this angel, He told me that it was found in [Luke 14:32](#), which says (in context),

³¹ Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and take counsel whether he is strong enough with ten thousand men to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand? ³² Or else, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks terms of peace.

The word of the Lord, then, revealed that this was the Peace Angel and that he was charged with the responsibility to bring “*terms of peace,*” in accordance with [Deut. 20:10](#). (I must admit that prior to receiving this revelation, I had overlooked the laws of war that demand terms of peace in order to make this a righteous invasion).

The Peace Angel is the angel of Christ’s ambassadors in [2 Cor. 5:18–20](#),

¹⁸ Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, ¹⁹ namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. ²⁰

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

The Greek word translated “reconciliation” is *katallasso*, which more properly means “conciliate.” A conciliation is where one person takes the initiative with a cease-fire and sends an ambassador for peace to ask the other side to stop fighting as well. A one-sided action is a conciliation. If both sides cease firing, then there is a RE-conciliation, or an *apo-katallasso*. The Greek word used in the passage above is *katallasso*, where God has taken the initiative by Himself, “*conciliating the world, not counting their trespasses against them.*”

During the entire Pentecostal Age, believers have been ambassadors for Christ insofar as the people of the world are concerned. Unfortunately, many of these ambassadors have preached threats of hell-fire for non-compliance, rather than passing on the message of conciliation. Yet at the end of the age, a new situation has arisen which again requires an ambassador of peace.

The Peace Angel is the divine ambassador to Babylon. He is sent to bring terms of peace, informing Babylon that its mandate to rule for a period of seven times has concluded, and that the divine court has decreed in favor of the saints of the Most High ([Dan. 7:27](#)). Babylon must relinquish its territory and release its slaves.

However, Babylon has refused to comply with the divine court ruling (2014), even after being given a one-year grace period (2015) according to the law in [Lev. 25:29](#). Therefore, the divine court has sent its heavenly armies (beginning in 2016) to enforce the decree and to begin restoring all things and set creation free ([Rom. 8:21](#)).

Chapter 22: The Great Supper

The Peace Angel not only declares peace, but is also an *enforcer of the peace*. Peace (that is, reconciliation) will be established one way or another. John hears the Peace Angel calling the birds of heaven to “*the great supper of God*” ([Rev. 19:17](#)). The metaphor paints a picture of a great battlefield, where vultures gather to feast on the dead bodies of those slain in battle.

This prophecy is taken directly from [Ezekiel 39:17–20](#), which is the conclusion of the battle that destroys Gog and Magog after their invasion. Many have wondered why John does not mention the battle against Gog and Magog until [Rev. 20:8](#), after the thousand years of the Kingdom. There are actually two battles against Gog and Magog, one before and another after the thousand years. Though John does not mention Gog and Magog by name in Revelation 19, he refers directly to the Gog prophecy, which identifies the enemies being destroyed.

In [Rev. 19:17](#) it is the angel who speaks to the birds of heaven, but in [Ezekiel 39:17–20](#), the prophet himself was told to speak to them:

¹⁷ And as for you, son of man, thus says the Lord God, “Speak to every kind of bird and to every beast of the field, ‘Assemble and come, gather from every side to My sacrifice which I am going to sacrifice for you, as a great sacrifice on the mountains of Israel, that you may eat flesh and drink blood. ¹⁸ You shall eat the flesh of mighty men, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth, as though they were rams, lambs, goats, and bulls, all of them fatlings of Bashan. ¹⁹ So you will eat fat until you are gluttoned, and drink blood until you are drunk, from My sacrifice which I have sacrificed for you. ²⁰ And you will be gluttoned at My table with horses and charioteers, with mighty men and all the men of war,’ declares the Lord God.”

This is said to be God’s “sacrifice.” In the laws of sacrifice in [Lev. 6:26](#), “*the priest who offers it for sin [i.e., a sin offering] shall eat it.*” But in the case of Gog and Magog, God’s sacrifice is for the birds of prey, which eat dead carcasses that still have blood in them. Such birds are unclean ([Lev. 11:13–19](#)) for that very reason, for God’s law forbids eating blood ([Lev. 17:10–13](#)).

God created unclean animals according to spiritual principles in order to show us prophetic things. We are not to eat blood, because we are not to be bloodthirsty. Yet because Gog and Magog have been bloodthirsty, God will bring judgment upon them in accordance with their own ways. It is the same as we see in the divine judgment against Mount Seir, or Edom. [Ezekiel 35:6](#) gives the divine verdict: “*since you have not hated bloodshed, therefore bloodshed will pursue you.*”

The same verdict, then, is decreed against Gog and Magog in Ezekiel 39, pictured graphically as a call to the birds of prey to come and feast on the carcasses of the invaders.

Because the Peace Angel refers to the prophecy in Ezekiel 39, it is clear that the heavenly invasion is designed to put an end to Gog’s occupation of “*the mountains of Israel*.” No doubt this prophecy has a broader application, but the focus is upon a specific situation. So who are these invaders of the mountains of Israel?

The Invaders

Most prophecy teachers today teach that Magog is Russia and Gog are the Russians. [Ezekiel 38:3](#) says, “*Behold, I am against you, O Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal.*” Prophecy teachers usually teach that Rosh is Russia, Meshech is Moscow, and Tubal is Tobolsk, a city in Russia that was founded in 1587.

However, these biblical names go back much farther in history, for they are the names of the sons of Japheth in [Gen. 10:2](#),

² The sons of Japheth were Gomer and Magog and Madai and Javan and Tubal and Meschech and Tiras.

We are then given the names of the family of Gomer in [Gen. 10:3](#),

³ And the sons of Gomer were Ashkenaz and Riphath and Togarmah.

Togarmah in particular is said to be Gog's ally in [Ezekiel 38:5, 6](#),

⁵ Persia, Ethiopia, and Put with them, all of them with shield and helmet; ⁶ Gomer with all its troops; Beth-togarmah [house of Togarmah] from the remote parts of the north with all its troops—many peoples with you.

The invaders, then, are identified as descendants of Japheth, with special emphasis given to the sons of Gomer, Japheth's oldest son. The Rus ("Russians"), however, did not move north from the Mideast, but rather came south from Scandinavia. They were a Scandinavian branch originating in the dispersed House of Israel—not from Japheth.

In fact, while some of the invaders surely have come from Russia, this does not mean that they are Russians. The key is in looking at all of the names of the invaders as a whole. If they can be identified in actual history, then we will know the truth.

History of Togarmah

There are two battles with Gog and Magog in the book of Revelation, one before and the other after the thousand-year reign of Christ on the earth. In the first battle ([Rev. 19:17, 18](#)) the angel only refers to Gog and Magog *indirectly* by quoting [Ezekiel 39:17–20](#). In the second battle, Gog and Magog are specifically named ([Rev. 20:8](#)).

The Peace Angel gives few details about the battle against Gog and Magog, other than to tell us of their defeat. We must rely upon Ezekiel to tell us of Gog's *invasion and occupation* of Israel prior to their defeat. Furthermore, Ezekiel's prophecy is crucial in understanding the identity of the nations actually involved in this invasion. Unfortunately, most prophecy teachers misunderstand it entirely, thinking that Russia will invade the Jewish state.

The key is found in [Ezekiel 38:6](#), where the House of Togarmah is listed as a key invader. Togarmah is the nephew of Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, and Meshech—all of whom are listed as the invaders. *History tells us specifically about Togarmah.*

During the Middle Ages, from about 600 to 1200 A.D., there existed a kingdom north of the Black Sea that was known as Khazaria. It reached its peak about 960 A.D. and then slowly began to be conquered and absorbed by the Rus (Russians) from the north.

The Khazars, or Chazars, had converted to Judaism somewhere between 620 and 740 A.D. The precise date of their conversion is disputed, but no one disputes the fact that they were a Turkish-Mongolian tribe that had converted to Judaism.

The Jewish Encyclopedia itself says, under the heading "Chazars,"

"A people of Turkish origin whose life and history are interwoven with the very beginnings of the history of the Jews of Russia... Historical evidence points to the region of the Ural as the home of the Chazars."

Later in the same article, The Jewish Encyclopedia tells how the Chazars decided to adopt Judaism as their religion:

"It was probably about that time that the chaghan [king] of the Chazars and his grandees, together with a large number of his heathen people, embraced the Jewish religion. According to A. Harkavy ('Meassef

Niddahim,' i.), the conversion took place in 620; according to others, in 740. King Joseph, in his letter to Hasdai ibn Shaprut (about 960) gives the following account of the conversion..."

We read also in An Introduction to the History of Khazaria, by Kevin Alan Brook,

"Under the leadership of kings Bulan and Obadiah, the standard rabbinical form of the Jewish religion spread among the Khazars. Saint Cyril came to Khazaria in 860 in a Byzantine attempt to convert the Khazars to Christianity, but he was unsuccessful, because by that time the Khazars had already adopted a basic level of Judaism."

Most of this history was unknown to the western world (and to prophecy teachers) until 1976, when a Jewish author named Arthur Koestler wrote about it in his book, The Thirteenth Tribe. He told the story how, in 960 A.D., a Jewish doctor for the Caliphate in Cordova, Spain, heard about a Jewish kingdom north of the Black Sea and wrote letters of inquiry to King Joseph of the Khazars. The Khazar king's letter is quoted now by all of the historians who write about Khazar history. Koestler writes on page 72,

"Joseph then proceeds to provide a genealogy of his people. Though a fierce Jewish nationalist, proud of wielding the 'Scepter of Judah,' he cannot, and does not, claim for them Semitic descent; he traces their ancestry not to Shem, but to Noah's third son, Japheth; or more precisely to Japheth's grandson, Togarma, the ancestor of all Turkish tribes. 'We have found in the family registers,' Joseph asserts boldly, 'that Togarma had ten sons, and the names of their offspring are as follows: Ugur, Dursu, Avars, Huns, Basili, Tarniak, Khazars, Zagora, Bulgars, Sabir. We are the sons of Khazar, the seventh...'"

King Joseph's letter, then, identifies the Jewish Khazars as being from the House of Togarmah, one of the invaders of the mountains of Israel in [Ezekiel 38:8](#). *They were not Russians by ethnicity*. In fact, in later centuries, the Russians conquered them and absorbed them. The Khazars, then, became known as the Ashkenazi branch of world Jewry, originating in western Russia and in eastern Europe.

Take note also that Ashkenaz himself was the brother of Togarmah ([Gen. 10:3](#)), so it is not unusual for the people of Togarmah to be called by the name of his brother, for it is likely that they lived nearby or among the Khazars.

Statistics show that these eastern European Jews comprise 80–90% of the world's Jews today, and after immigrating to the mountains of Israel, the House of Togarmah has become the dominant ethnic group in the Israeli state today.

The Invasion

Once we learn history, we are then able to obtain a better understanding of Ezekiel's prophecy. The invasion of the mountains of Israel was mostly a *conquest by immigration* a century ago. The invasion of Gog from the land of Magog appears to be *an invasion of Russian Jews, not an invasion of Russians themselves*. With the invaders have come Jews from "*Persia, Ethiopia, and Put*" ([Ezekiel 38:5](#)), along with Jews from other parts of the world.

In other words, Ezekiel 38 and 39 prophesies of the Zionist movement, by which the mountains of Israel were conquered by Jews from Russia and backed by other Jews from around the world. This invasion was crowned with success in 1948 when the Jewish state was established.

When the House of Togarmah converted to Judaism, these people of Turkish origin became Jews. They had never been Israelites by ethnicity, but by adopting Old Covenant Judaism, they did become Jews in the same manner that so many have done in the past. I do not question their identity as *Jews*, but they had no right to call their state *Israel*. This subterfuge has served to hide the fulfillment of Ezekiel's prophecy and to create the perception of danger from a Russian invasion. In fact, the invasion has already taken place, and all that remains is for the Zionist experiment to end in disaster.

The Peace Angel has already sent ambassadors to the Jewish state in the attempt to reconcile with Jesus Christ and to cease its hostility to Him ([Lev. 26:40–42](#)). To this day, the peace overtures have been rejected by most of the people and, more importantly, by their representatives in government.

For this reason, the Peace Angel calls for the birds to assemble “*for the great supper of God*” ([Rev. 19:17](#)). [Ezekiel 39:17](#) pictures it as a divine “sacrifice,” where the birds of prey, instead of the priests, eat the sacrifice, “*as though they were rams, lambs, goats, and bulls*” ([Ezekiel 39:18](#)).

There are many other aspects to this prophecy that one must know in order to understand the full picture, but we cannot cover all of them here. For further study, see my book, [The Struggle for the Birthright](#), particularly [chapter 15](#).

The Beast is Arrested

[Revelation 19:19](#) says,

¹⁹ And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies, assembled to make war against Him who sat upon the horse, and against His army.

In their fight against the crown rights of Jesus Christ, they refuse to submit to the rightful Heir to the throne of Israel and of the world itself. Blinded by hatred and unbelief, they do not realize that they cannot win this battle. Jesus prophesied in [Matthew 21:44](#),

⁴⁴ And he who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust.

This was a veiled warning to the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem that they should not become part of the beast system (that is, the “feet and toes” of the image in Daniel 2), for if they should do so, they would be in danger when the “stone” arose to grind the image to powder. They did not heed Jesus’ warning. The Jewish Rothschilds worked hard to take control of the beast system in its final “banking” phase from 1815–2014. Their success only ensures their destruction when God judges the beast.

When the Zionist movement succeeded in establishing a Jewish state, a national entity emerged that served as a focal point for this judgment. For this reason, when the Peace Angel prophesies of the final battle that overthrows “*the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies*,” he refers to Ezekiel 39, which describes the Jewish state located in the old land. Jerusalem itself becomes liable for all the blood of the martyrs and prophets since the beginning of time. That city is liable because in the end it carries the authority of the beast systems.

[Revelation 19:20](#), [21](#) continues,

²⁰ And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone. ²¹ And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat upon the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh.

The beast is seized when his allotted time to rule ends. As we have shown previously, the beast’s *seven times* of dominion ends progressively in 2014–2018. The “signs” that deceived men were first mentioned in [Rev. 13:13](#), which were his healing from the fatal wound and the fire from heaven. The fatal wound was the papal wound that was healed in 1804, and later, in 1945, the fire from heaven manifested as nuclear bombs falling upon Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The western nations, along with the Israeli state, are strongholds of the beast system known as Babylon, the great harlot, Sodom, Egypt, and Jerusalem. This beast system deceives those with the mark of the beast—the lawless ones

who are motivated by the love of money. But in the end, the main leaders of the beast system are arrested and judged by the fiery law of God.

“The rest were killed with the sword,” not a weapon in one’s hand, but a sword coming from His mouth. We have already shown that this “sword” is the word of God—in this case, a verdict or decree of divine judgment. The manner in which they are “killed” will depend upon the status of each individual and his/her circumstance.

As for “the great supper,” this is most likely a metaphor and will not be fulfilled literally. It is said to be a spiritual “sacrifice,” which is hardly literal. Under the Old Covenant, this might be fulfilled in a physical manner, complete with a battlefield and vultures. There may be a limited fulfillment of this in an Old Covenant manner, when applied to Old Covenant people, but yet for others it seems to describe the consuming of the flesh in a spiritual manner.

Being “*crucified with Christ*” ([Gal. 2:20](#)) is a graphic description, but we do not have to be literally crucified in order to put the old man of flesh to death. In my view, the purpose of God is not to destroy those who have been deceived by the beast’s lies and signs, but to enlighten them with the truth. The truth is the word of God, which comes from one’s mouth as a “sword.”

In the first battle against Gog and Magog, which comes at the start of the thousand-year reign of Christ, the great “sacrifice” will be mostly destructive, because Jerusalem itself must be cast out. The Old Covenant must be abolished for all to see, so that it can be replaced by a better covenant (New Jerusalem). The second battle against Gog and Magog may also be destructive, but it is soon followed by the general resurrection in which all of the dead will be raised for judgment.

At that time, the lake of fire will consume the flesh, and although the Age of Judgment will be long, it will have a positive effect upon all who have ever lived. Even those who fought consciously against Jesus Christ will learn righteousness, because the truth will then be known, and men will not be able to deny it.

Conclusion

This concludes the three-chapter section in the book of Revelation that prophesies of Babylon’s fall, the overthrow of human government, and the Kingdom’s takeover of land and territory on earth. [Daniel 2:35](#) says that it will be like a stone that grows until it fills the whole earth. That means the territory of the Kingdom will start out small, and as nations join the Federation of Kingdom Nations, Christ’s rule will be extended to other parts of the earth.

At the end of the thousand years, there will still be portions of the earth that remain in “outer darkness,” but, as we will see, the takeover will be complete after the final battle against Gog and Magog.

Then will come the Great White Throne Judgment, and the great task of restoring all of humanity to full reconciliation with Christ will begin.

Book 8

A study of Revelation 20–22.

Chapter 1: The Angel of Constraint

In our previous book, we saw that Revelation 16–19 records the judgment upon the beast system known as Babylon and “the great harlot.” That book ended with a brief description of the overthrow of Gog and its allies who had occupied the mountains of Israel. These divine judgments, John tells us, are designed to prepare the way for the Kingdom of God, pictured in [Dan. 2:35](#) as a great stone.

We now come to the final chapters of the book of Revelation. Revelation 20 covers the thousand-year Kingdom Age, focusing on the two resurrections, one before and one after the Millennium. John tells us that the first resurrection cannot occur prior to the first battle against Gog and Magog, nor can the second resurrection take place prior to a second battle against the same nation (or group of nations).

[Rev. 20:1](#) begins, saying,

¹ And I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand.

By personal revelation, I was given to know that this is the Angel of Constraint, the one who has “*the key of the abyss*” and has the power to bind and loose. He is a kind of divine prison guard overseeing the abyss that constrains evil spiritual entities.

This is also the “fifth angel” (blowing the fifth trumpet) mentioned in [Rev. 9:1](#). In that case he was given the key to open the abyss (also translated “the bottomless pit”), releasing Mohammed to bring judgment upon the church for its rebellion. Whereas in [Rev. 9:1](#) the angel was called to release the “locusts,” in [Rev. 20:1](#) the angel was called to arrest the dragon.

[Rev. 20:2, 3](#) says,

² And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, ³ and threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he should not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time.

The purpose of this imprisonment is to prevent “*the devil and Satan*” from deceiving the nations during the Kingdom Age. This allows the word of God to spread unhindered to ensure the dominance of Christ’s Kingdom during that Age. No doubt the binding of Satan removes the blindness in the church ([Deut. 29:4](#)), along with “*the covering which is over all peoples*” and “*the veil which is stretched over all nations*” ([Isaiah 25:7](#)).

The Angel of Constraint, then, binds Satan and looses the church at the same time. This opens people’s eyes and ears to hear the word of the Lord. Though John does not mention the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the prophets speak of this often in conjunction with the manifestation of the sons of God and conditions in the Age to come. In fact, the prophecy about Gog and Magog ends with such a declaration in [Ezekiel 39:29](#),

²⁹ “And I will not hide My face from them any longer, for I shall have poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel,” declares the Lord God.

The promise of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was fulfilled partially on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2, but there was no invasion of Gog and Magog at that time. Obviously, then, the day of Pentecost was not the real fulfillment of

Ezekiel's prophecy about the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Ezekiel says that the Spirit will be poured out when Gog and Magog are brought to judgment just before the first resurrection.

Chapter 2: Millennial Views

[Revelation 20:2](#) says,

² And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years.

Revelation 20 uses the term *chilia* (“thousand”) six times. It is often argued that the term is plural, and therefore it refers to “thousands” of years, not merely one thousand. But this argument is not valid linguistically. While it is true that the word is technically plural, this is not how the term is actually used in Greek. *Chilia* is a plural word, but it can only be properly translated as a singular “thousand” to make any sense.

For example, in [2 Peter 3:8](#) we read,

⁸ But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand [*chilia*] years, and a thousand [*chilia*] years as one day.

Here “one day” is as a *chilia*. In other words, ONE day equals ONE thousand years. Peter was not telling us a day was like “thousands” of years. In fact, here is where it is helpful to know that Peter was thinking in Hebrew thought patterns, even though he wrote in Greek. Peter was quoting from [Psalm 90:4](#), which says,

⁴ For a thousand [*eleph*] years in Thy sight are like yesterday when it passes by, or as a watch in the night.

Where the psalmist uses the Hebrew word *eleph*, Peter uses the word *chilia* as its Greek equivalent. *Eleph*, however, is singular, while *chilia* is technically plural. The psalmist meant one thousand years, because if he had meant more, he would have used the plural *elephi*, which is used elsewhere ([Num. 10:36](#), “the many thousands in Israel”).

The Greek word *chilia* is plural because it is used as an adjective that modifies a plural noun (“years”). Virtually all Bible translators know this, and this is why they do NOT render it as “thousands of years.” The NASB, then, is correct (along with virtually all other translations) when it renders *chilia* as “a thousand years” in [2 Peter 3:8](#) and in [Rev. 20:2](#).

The History of Millennial Teaching

My area of research is in history, rather than language. When we look at the history of philosophy and thought, I know that the idea of a Sabbath Millennium is very old and is a well-known idea coming out of a Hebrew understanding of Scripture. For instance, in the *Epistle of Barnabas*, usually dated around 115 A.D., we read in chapter 13,

³ And even in the beginning of the creation he makes mention of the Sabbath. And God made in six days the works of his hands; and he finished them on the seventh day, and he rested the seventh day, and sanctified it.

⁴ Consider, my children, what that signifies, he finished them in six days. The meaning of it is this; that in six thousand years the Lord God will bring all things to an end. ⁵ For with him one day is as a thousand years; as himself testifies, saying, Behold, this day shall be as a thousand years. Therefore, children, in six days, that is, in six thousand years, all things are accomplished. ⁶ ... then he shall gloriously rest in that seventh day.

This letter is written in Greek and was cited by many of the early Church fathers. I do not propose to enter into the debate of its canonicity or the date of its authorship. I use it as an early example of the fact that *chilia* is used as a singular “thousand,” as well as an example of the early belief that there would be a Sabbath Millennium in which “*all things are accomplished*.”

If the author wrote this around 115 A.D., as many say, then he was almost certainly a younger contemporary of John himself, who died around 100 A.D. The book of Revelation was not even written until 96 A.D. It is not likely that the author of *Barnabas* would have disagreed with John's own interpretation of the book of Revelation.

John had other Hebrew disciples who were "the ancient and first expositors" of Scripture. Anastasius Sinaita says of them,

"Taking occasion from Papias of Hierapolis, the illustrious, a disciple of the apostle who leaned on the bosom of Christ, and Clemens, and Pantaenus the priest of [the church] of the Alexandrians, and the wise Ammonius, the ancient and first expositors, who agreed with each other, who understood the work of the six days as referring to Christ and the whole church." (Fragment IX)

Greek and Hebrew Mindsets

The Millennial teaching came out of Hebrew thought patterns, based upon the historicity of the Old Testament. It is only later that the Hebrew view was discarded in favor of the Neoplatonic Greek view. For this reason, the *Epistle of Barnabas* was attacked later by those who preferred the Greek (Alexandrian) method of allegorical biblical interpretation. The Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. X (1911 ed.), under "Millennium," tells us,

"The most powerful adversary of millenarianism was Origen of Alexandria. In view of the Neo-Platonism on which his doctrines were founded and of his spiritual-allegorical method of explaining the Holy Scriptures, he could not side with the millenarians. He combated them expressly, and, owing to the great influence which his writings exerted on ecclesiastical theology especially in Oriental countries, millenarianism gradually disappeared from the ideas of Oriental Christians."

"St. Augustine finally held to the conviction that there will be no millennium... In the same book [De Civitate Dei] he gives us an allegorical explanation of Chap. 20 of the Apocalypse. The first resurrection, of which this chapter treats, he tells us, refers to the spiritual rebirth in baptism; the Sabbath of one thousand years, after the six thousand years of history, is the whole of eternal life; or, in other words, the number one thousand is intended to express perfection, and the last space of one thousand years must be understood as referring to the end of the world

"This explanation of the illustrious Doctor was adopted by succeeding Western theologians, and millenarianism in its earlier shape no longer received support.

"The Protestantism of the sixteenth century ushered in a new epoch of millenarian doctrines. Protestant fanatics of the earlier years, particularly the Anabaptists, believed in a new, golden age under the scepter of Christ, after the overthrow of the papacy and secular empires."

Thus, we see that the spiritual-allegorical interpretation of Scripture, was popularized by Origen in the third century. He often tortured the Old Testament into speaking allegorically. The Alexandrian view had little use for *history* as viewed by the Hebrews.

Greek thought was based upon their mythological view of religion. Their religion was based largely upon myths, which were stories that were understood as allegories, rather than as history. Thus, when trying to convert Greeks to Christianity, some teachers adopted the Greek mindset in order to make it more palatable to them.

But historically speaking, John was a Hebrew, and he had a Hebrew mindset. The Hebrews certainly used allegories and parables, but even its allegories were based on real history. Adam and Eve were real people. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were real, and their stories are not mere allegories.

In fact, their stories are *historical allegories*. Their histories had prophetic meaning. Abraham really did have two wives: Hagar and Sarah. They were allegories of the Old and New Covenants, as Paul says in [Gal. 4:22–31](#), but they

really did live as historical characters on earth. Allegory does not displace history in our Scriptures, but gives spiritual meaning to history.

The primary difference between the Greek and Hebrew views is that the Greeks saw no need for any of the biblical stories to be rooted in history, as long as the stories had an allegorical meaning. The Hebrew view saw all things rooted in history, but also saw that history has meaning and often sets patterns for future prophetic fulfillment.

It is ironic that the Roman Church repudiated Origen of Alexandria in the year 400 A.D. for his teachings on universal reconciliation, but they adopted his method of interpreting Scripture. This was how the teaching of the Sabbath Millennium was lost. The Catholic Encyclopedia says that the Hebrew view was revived by Protestants in the sixteenth century. Yet in recent years, some Protestants have continued to reject the idea of a Millennium.

In my view, we ought to adopt a Hebrew mindset and discard the Greek one. Hebrew thought is rooted in biblical law and its judgments. When God sentences men or nations to slavery, it is always according to specific time cycles, which are rooted in history. Divine judgment applies the laws of time in direct proportion to the seriousness of the crime. Any allegorical interpretation of this is an extra layer of meaning that cannot replace the historical application.

So the Hebrews saw the basic Sabbath law not only in terms of a weekly Sabbath-rest, but also in terms of seven-year cycles, forty-nine year cycles, and even the Great Sabbath cycle of 7,000 years. John was certainly familiar with these teachings, and he did nothing to refute them in his writings. Therefore, I conclude that the thousand years in Revelation 20 is a literal time period that follows the laws of time as seen in the Sabbath law.

Chapter 3: The Great Sabbath

In the book of Revelation, the phrase “thousand years” appears six times, all within the tight framework of [Rev. 20:1–7](#). This suggests a period of six thousand years of history up to this point in time, as if to emphasize the entrance into the Great Sabbath Day (millennium).

Sowing and Reaping

Further, John treats this millennium as a Sabbath Day. The law commanded Sabbaths to be times of rest. During Sabbath years, no sowing or reaping was to be done. [Lev. 25:3–5](#) says,

³ Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard and gather in its crop, ⁴ but during the seventh year the land shall have a Sabbath rest, a Sabbath to the Lord; you shall not sow your field nor prune your vineyard. ⁵ Your harvest’s aftergrowth you shall not reap, and your grapes of untrimmed vines you shall not gather; the land shall have a Sabbatical year.

Resurrection is God’s way of reaping the fruit of the ground, and so we find that there are two resurrections in Revelation 20, one before and one after—but not *during*—the thousand years.

Further, God promised to provide an abundance in the sixth year in order to carry the people through the Sabbath without shortages. [Lev. 25:20, 21](#) says,

²⁰ But if you say, “What are we going to eat on the seventh year if we do not sow or gather in our crops?” ²¹ Then I will so order My blessing for you in the sixth year that it will bring forth the crop for three years.

This passage was speaking specifically of the seventh Sabbath year, which was then followed by a Jubilee year. That is why God promised to bless them with enough food for three years, rather than just two. On other sixth years, God would bless them with double crops to last them through the Sabbath land rests.

The same principle was seen in the weekly Sabbath when Israel gathered twice as much manna on the sixth day to carry them through the seventh day ([Exodus 16:22](#)). John does not mention it directly, but we understand that God will pour out His Spirit at the end of the sixth millennial “day” at the end of the age, so that we have provision during the Great Millennium—the seventh great Day.

The Serpent Bound

Coinciding with the end of six days of labor and the start of the Great Sabbath, the serpent is bound for a thousand years. This is necessary, because when Adam and Eve believed the word of the serpent, they subjected themselves to his deception. Being unable to pay restitution for their sin, they were “sold” into slavery according to the law in [Exodus 22:3](#).

Paul says later in [Rom. 6:16](#), “*Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey...?*” He tells the believers that prior to coming to Christ, “*you were slaves of sin*” ([Rom. 6:17](#)).

So in order to release mankind from its slavery caused by Adam’s sin, the serpent must be bound and prevented from deceiving the nations during the Great Sabbath. But once the seventh “day” has passed, the serpent is again released, because this is only the end of the first Sabbath of history. There are yet six more such Sabbaths before Creation’s Jubilee, where all are fully reconciled to God, and where every man returns to his inheritance in God.

Kindling Fires

On this great millennial Sabbath, God also seems to observe the Sabbath law found in [Exodus 35:3](#),

³ You shall not kindle a fire in any of your dwellings on the Sabbath day.

For this reason, we do not read of “*the lake of fire*” until after the Great Sabbath Day has passed ([Rev. 20:14, 15](#)). The law itself prophesies of the acts of God, for He follows His own law. Why? Because the fiery law emanates from His nature, and He will always be true to Himself.

Six Days and Fine Linen

The Sabbath laws give us the foundation stones of the laws of Time, on which prophetic time cycles are based. Therefore, Revelation 20 speaks of a “thousand years” six times to suggest the end of six thousand years and the start of a Sabbath Millennium.

The Hebrew word for “six” is *shesh*, in [Exodus 20:9](#), “*Six days you shall labor.*” But *shesh*, as used in [Exodus 39:28](#) in describing the garment of the high priest, is also the word for “fine linen.”

This suggests that the Bride’s fine linen (in [Rev. 19:7, 8](#)) is given to her at the end of six thousand years. Although the Bride is made up of individuals living throughout many generations, John was referring to the time when the body would be complete. She is thus clothed and “ready” after six thousand years.

Chapter 4: Raising up the Rulers

The first part of [Rev. 20:4](#) says,

⁴ And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them. ...

The ones seated upon these “thrones” are the overcomers. These are the “saints” that [Dan. 7:27](#) describes, as they are given dominion over the earth. Their “thrones” are also mentioned in [Dan. 7:9](#), “*I kept looking until thrones were set up.*” Their thrones are distinct from the throne of the Ancient of Days, but yet it shows that God has delegated authority to His saints.

In other words, God rules the earth *indirectly*, while giving the overcomers *direct* rule in order to fulfill His original intent from [Gen. 1:26](#), “*Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let THEM rule...*”

After a long period of “seven times” in which the dominion had been given to the governments of “beasts,” the time has come at last for the authority to be transferred to the saints of the Most High God. Hence, Revelation 20 correlates with the 20th letter of the Hebrew alphabet, *resh*, which means “head,” in this case denoting headship and government.

[Revelation 20:4](#) continues,

⁴ ... And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

This statement primarily is designed to tell us that not all Christians will rule in the Age to come. The thrones are not given to those who have the mark of lawlessness upon their forehead and upon their hands. If they worship the beast or his image through the love of money, they are not qualified for the throne. They do not literally have to be “beheaded” to qualify as an overcomer, for then even Jesus Himself would be disqualified. They do need to put the old man to death and replace their carnal, Adamic mind and head with the headship of Jesus Christ.

A Limited Resurrection

[Revelation 20:4–6](#) says,

⁴ ... and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. ⁵ The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. ⁶ Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.

It is clear from verse 5 above that this is a *limited* resurrection and that *only believers* are raised at this time. “*The rest of the dead*” are not raised at this time, but must await the general resurrection after the thousand years are completed ([Rev. 20:11](#), [12](#)). When John calls this “*the first resurrection*,” he implies that there is another resurrection coming later.

The Greek view of Scripture treats this first resurrection allegorically and personally, claiming that it is a reference to one’s justification. They say that when a man comes to Christ and is baptized, he passes from death to life. This spiritual process, they say, is the first resurrection, and he then ascends to be seated with Christ in heavenly places.

I do not doubt that this is what happens to individuals, one at a time, as they become part of the body of Christ. But John was not referring to individuals coming to Christ. He was looking prophetically at the resurrection of the many-membered body, which included the martyrs throughout history.

While individual believers certainly enjoy a measure of spiritual authority during their ministries on earth, they (like Daniel himself) have been subject to the kings of the beast nations. The saints in history have been limited in their earthly authority by the divine judgment upon Jerusalem and upon the kings of Judah who were stripped of the Dominion Mandate ([Jer. 27:6](#), [11](#)). It is not until those beast systems reach the end of their divine mandate that the saints (as a body of people) are given full jurisdiction over the earth.

Chapter 5: The Proper Approach to Revelation

Jesus Christ is revealed, or manifested, by His righteous acts. This occurs on two levels: individual and corporate. Both are the result of God's plan, whether our view focuses on the personal or the historical works of God in the big picture. The New Covenant is the most prominent promise of God, first to individuals and later to the corporate body, to intervene in the earth in order to accomplish His plan, which He purposed from the beginning.

The precise nature of God's promise is seen in [Deut. 29:10–15](#), where He vowed to make all men His people and to be their God. Such a promise necessitates divine intervention by an act of a sovereign God. Such a divine act demands a response from men, but God's grace is seen as the *cause*, not as the *effect* of men's response. Men resist, but in the end God's will prevails. In fact, the promise of God is a test of will to see whose will is stronger.

In the end, then, we see God's goal accomplished, first in [Rev. 5:13](#), where all of creation honors Christ as King, and secondly in [Rev. 15:3](#), [4](#) in the Song of Moses and the Song of the Lamb.

³ ... Great and marvelous are Thy works, O Lord God, the Almighty; Righteous and true are Thy ways, Thou King of the nations. ⁴ Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? For Thou alone art holy; for all the nations will come and worship before Thee, for Thy righteous acts have been revealed [phaneroo, "brought to light"].

Here we see a combination of two Hebrew concepts that are set forth in the Hebrew alphabet. His righteous acts, or works, are pictured in the *yood*, as an open hand, and the *ayin*, that is an eye signifying seeing or manifestation. When the works of God are "revealed," they are made visible for all to see. It takes a righteous act of God to heal the blindness and remove "*the veil which is stretched over all nations*" ([Isaiah 25:7](#)). When all see His righteous acts, they will glorify Him.

Perfection vs. Righteous Acts

Classic Greek culture was interested in discovering the Ideal Man. Their obsession with beautiful art and sculpture (and beauty in general) gives testimony of their mindset. This is, of course, a lofty goal, which few would find reason to criticize. But the Hebrew mindset was different.

Hebrew culture was based on works, or righteous acts, as an expression or manifestation of one's heart. Scripture sets forth two paths toward achieving this goal, each defined by a covenant. The Old Covenant sets forth righteous acts as proceeding from the will of man. The New Covenant sets forth the righteous acts of God to fulfill His promise by the strength of His will. Both covenants possess the law, but under one covenant the law is a righteous standard imposed upon unwilling flesh, while the other covenant is a promise of God to write the law upon our hearts so that we come into agreement with Him.

The *yood* is an open hand, signifying "the works of the law," and the Apostle Paul uses this phrase many times. It is the tenth letter of the Hebrew alphabet, which is the number pointing to the law. Shortly after Paul's conversion, he went to Mount Sinai in Arabia, where God gave him the revelation of the New Covenant. He then understood that justification and righteousness come from an act of God, not from our own works. In other words, righteousness comes by the "hand" (*yood*) of God, not by the "hand" (*yood*) of man.

The captivities of Israel and Judah show that men's vows to God, though well intentioned, cannot save anyone, simply because no man can sufficiently fulfill his vow to warrant justification. On the other hand, God has no such problem fulfilling His vows to us. The failure of the Old Covenant path attempting to justify men by the will of man must be contrasted to the success of the New Covenant path which is by the will of God. He wills, and we respond with our own act of will.

The epistle of James does not contradict the writings of Paul, but it sets forth a *clearer* Hebrew mindset. He insists that faith is manifested by one's works. Hence, if a man claims to have faith as a believer in Christ, then there ought to be evidence of God's work in his life, his character, and his works. This evidence is not about men doing good works by righteous character obtained by an Old Covenant vow, but rather by men doing good works as evidence of the Holy Spirit's work within the believer.

The book of Revelation, then, sets forth the righteous acts of God in the earth and in the nations. What is said about the nations is equally true of each individual within those nations. Hence, when the nations worship Christ on account of His righteous acts, they have the same motivation as individual believers who see the acts of God in their own lives. In both cases, the righteous acts of God are the fulfillment of the New Covenant. It is evidence of God proactively fulfilling His vow in people and in the nations as a whole.

The *ayin* means "an eye," but it is also the Hebrew number 70. This number signifies "all nations," for in Genesis 10 we count the origin of nations to be 70 in number. Seventy is also the biblical number for "restoration." For this reason, Adam died at the age of 930 ([Gen. 5:5](#)), falling short of God's "glory" (1000) by precisely 70 years. Therefore, the number 70 (*ayin*) is what is needed for all nations to be restored, as pictured in [Rev. 15:3, 4](#).

Interpreting Revelation Allegorically or Historically

There are some who have spiritualized and individualized the entire book of Revelation. They tend to discard the history of God's acts among the nations. In doing so, they follow a Greek mindset, rather than interpreting the book with a Hebrew mindset. Furthermore, they treat the book of Revelation differently from the book of Daniel.

Much of the early Church was expelled from Judea by persecution ([Acts 8:1](#)). The result of this scattering was that Greek converts quickly overwhelmed their Judean counterparts, and it was not long before the early Church lost its Hebrew mindset. The Church soon adopted the Greek allegorical method of interpretation. Greek religion was based on mythology—stories that were said to have meaning—and those myths were not actual historical events.

The Old Testament stories of brutality and genocide were objectionable to the Greeks, and the Church soon began to claim that these were mere allegories, rather than historical events. Hence, it was not long before the Church even began to divorce the Old Testament from actual history. They continued to insist upon the historicity of the gospels, of course; but because they did not understand the book of Revelation, they began to treat it as allegorically as they had done with the Old Testament.

The book of Revelation pre-wrote the history of the western nations and the Church. This history had hardly begun in the first century, so men lacked confirmation of its historical interpretation. It took centuries before enough historical events took place that would allow a Historicist interpretation of the book. By that time the allegorical interpretation had already been deeply rooted in the Church.

It was not until the development of the printing press in the fifteenth century, resulting in the Protestant Reformation, that the Scriptures were unchained from the altar of cathedrals and given to the people. When the Scriptures could be studied independently, the Reformers discovered that the book of Revelation was a historical book written in symbols as envisioned by John. This was how the Historicist view of Revelation soon became the dominant view of early Protestant groups. It was replaced by the Futurist view only in the late 1800's through the teachings of Darby and Scofield.

The Futurist view, which dominates evangelical and Pentecostal churches today, is a recent development in Christian thought. Unfortunately, many assume that this view has always existed, but that is not so. Certain elements of Futurism can be found in the earlier allegorical view, but yet it is unique. Whereas the allegorists divorced Revelation from history, the Futurists are simply ignorant of history and have no way of knowing how these prophecies have been fulfilled.

Whereas the allegorists spiritualized everything, the Futurists literalize everything, and since they see no historical record of the earth and sea being destroyed, they put these things into the future during a seven-year time of The Great Tribulation.

It is my purpose to set forth an alternative to Allegorism and Futurism. The Historicist view believes that John's visions portrayed historical events, not by literal interpretation, but with covert symbols and signs. This view treats Revelation in the manner in which the book of Daniel is treated. The "image" in Daniel 2, the "tree" in Daniel 4, and the "beasts" in Daniel 7 and 8 were not meant to be interpreted literally, even though their reality was unquestionable. They were symbols representing nations and the spiritual forces behind them.

So also the "dragon" in Revelation 12 and the "beasts" in Revelation 13, while real enough, are not literal in the sense of being earthly or carnal. They are pictures of spiritual realities which manifest through nations and other entities on the earth, much like an evil spirit manifests through individuals who are possessed.

The bottom line is that the Historicist view interprets the book of Revelation in a way similar to how the Apostle Paul allegorically interprets the two wives of Abraham in Galatians 4. Paul does not question the historicity of the story, but shows how the two women represent two covenants allegorically. In other words, in the Hebrew mindset an allegory is *history with spiritual or allegorical meaning*. Paul does not divorce history from the allegory, as did the Greeks. The Greeks saw no need for religion to be based upon actual historical events, as long as they could lay hold of allegorical teachings.

Scripture, however, is based on history—real events, not just inspired stories or parables. The fact that these historical events were full of spiritual meaning and prophecy as types and shadows of future events shows the sovereignty of God in the progressive history of creation. Hence, Daniel saw visions of future historical events, as I showed in my study in Daniel.

The book of Revelation, too, is based upon the same Hebrew mindset as is seen in Daniel. The fact that Daniel was an incomplete book, covering only the first three "beasts," implies that another book would have to be written later to complete the prophecy of the beast nations during their time of dominion.

Daniel's book effectively ends in 163 B.C. with the culmination of the Grecian "beast." John's book focuses upon the fourth beast (Rome) and especially upon the "little horn," giving us details in Revelation 13 that were unknown to Daniel.

These are historical events, even though John reveals spiritual forces behind the beast and its "little horn" extension. It is no mere allegory, nor is his revelation consigned to a future seven-year period. Instead, we see a panorama of tribulation-history that covers a long period of "seven times," that is, a period of 7×360 years. Daniel covers less than 500 years of this time of tribulation. John gives us the rest of the story.

Chapter 6: The Resurrection

The idea of resurrection is uniquely a Hebrew idea, though some later reinterpreted it incorrectly to mean the immortality of the soul. In the years of the Grecian Empire (prior to the birth of Jesus) the Jews came increasingly under the influence of Greek thought.

Greek religion, along with many others, believed that the body was inherently evil and that the soul was inherently good. Greek theology declared that the demiurge (a devil figure) created all physical matter, and that man “fell” out of the heavens through various stages (represented by the planets) until he came to be trapped in a physical body. To them, man was a good spiritual being until he became tainted by an evil material earth that had been created by the devil.

Out of this arose the concept of dualism, where good and evil, light and darkness, God and the devil, heaven and hell were all eternal. To God belonged all spiritual things; to the devil belonged all material things. The problem came—so they taught—when light and darkness, good and evil, and flesh and spirit mixed together. The solution, they said, was for them to be separated again into their separate spheres. In other words, the Greek solution to the problem of evil was for good and evil to *coexist forever* and that neither can exist without the other.

The Hebrew view, as seen in Genesis 1, tells us that God created all things and pronounced everything “good.” As the Creator, He owns all matter. The earth was created to glorify God in this newly-created dimension. Heaven and earth were in unity at the beginning.

Scripture shows that sin and darkness entered later, and so these are temporary. In the end, all evil and disharmony will be eradicated. In the end, all things will be put under the feet of Christ, and God will be “*all in all*” ([1 Cor. 15:28](#)). Creation is not destined to be partitioned between heaven and hell or between God and Satan. God does not take back all spiritual things and leave all material things to the devil. No, all things will be *filled with God* ([Eph. 1:23](#)). Darkness will be overcome by light. All things will be reconciled to Jesus Christ.

Whereas the Greeks believed that the unity of heaven and earth was *the problem*, the Hebrew view believes that the unity of heaven and earth is *the solution*. God will recover all that is His by right of creation.

The Greeks were horrified at the idea of a resurrection, for their goal was to escape this evil body. They had no understanding of a glorified body, for in their view God would never taint Himself by inhabiting human flesh. The idea that the Holy Spirit would indwell human flesh was anathema to a Greek.

When the Gnostics tried to adopt some Christian views and tried to reconcile these with their Greek views, they perverted the Scriptures and came into conflict with the apostles in the early church. They tried to change the definition of resurrection to mean the immortality of the soul. Instead of being raised into a good body on earth, they changed it to the separation of the immortal soul from the body.

As I said, the difference between Greek and Hebrew thought is rooted in their opposite views of creation. This sharp contrast forms the background of all disputes regarding the resurrection of the dead. We cannot take the time to expound upon all of these disputes, but we certainly must show how the idea of resurrection is uniquely a Hebrew idea, based on the Hebrew view of a good God creating all things “*very good*” ([Gen. 1:31](#)) and upon the principle of God’s ownership.

Light from Job

Job is the oldest book of the Bible, for Job himself was elderly when Moses was born and was already dead when Moses wrote the books of the law. [Job 14:13–15](#) is translated in Dr. Bullinger’s notes:

¹³ Oh! that in Sheol Thou wouldst cover me; conceal me, till Thine anger turn away; fix me a time; and then remember me. ¹⁴ If a man dieth, will he live again? Then—all my days of service I will wait, until the time of my reviving come; ¹⁵ Then shalt Thou call, and I will answer Thee; for Thou wilt yearn toward Thy handiwork.

Here the man ponders his time in Sheol (the grave), covered and concealed on account of divine judgment for Adam's sin. He then asks, "*If a man dieth, will he live again?*" Yet he knows that if he waits long enough, "*until the time of my reviving come*," then God will call him forth, and he will answer—that is, he will be raised from the dead.

This is reinforced and clarified later in [Job 19:25–27](#) (Bullinger's translation),

²⁵ I know that my Redeemer [ever] lives, and at the latter day on earth shall stand; ²⁶ and after [worms] this body have consumed, yet in my flesh I shall Eloah see; ²⁷ whom I, e'en I, shall see upon my side. Mine eyes shall see Him—stranger, now, no more; [For this] my inmost soul with longing waits.

His resurrection, then, is seen as a bodily resurrection, for he expected to see God in his flesh, even though the worms had already consumed his body after death.

Light from Daniel

The idea of a bodily resurrection is seen again in the book of Daniel. The eleventh chapter of Daniel prophesies of the time of judgment upon Judah from his time to that of Antiochus Epiphanes (163 B.C.), and then skips to the end of the age, where he sees a resurrection for judgment. [Dan. 12:2](#), [3](#) says,

² And many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt. ³ And those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

This brief view of the great judgment was revealed in greater detail earlier in [Dan. 7:10](#), where the prophet saw the Ancient of Days sitting upon the throne in the divine court, judging humanity. The Concordant Version of [Dan. 7:10](#) reads,

¹⁰ Streaming is a flame in front and issuing from before Him; a thousand thousands are irradiating Him, and ten thousand ten thousands are rising before Him. Adjudication sits and the scrolls are opened.

In other words, the prophet sees the majority "*rising*" (from the dead), while the minority "*are irradiating Him*," that is, they are transformed by the light of His presence. In [Dan. 7:9](#) the great Judge is pictured as "*the Ancient of Days*" (NASB) or as "*the Transferrer of Days*" (CV). The Hebrew word *attiyk* is from the word *athak*, which means "to move, proceed, advance, move on, *become old*, be removed, transferred," and it includes the idea of "advancing in years."

I believe that both the NASB and the CV are correct, but they show different aspects of the same Judge. He comes to *transfer* jurisdiction to the saints of the Most High, but He is also pictured as an old man with white hair in order to draw upon the law of resurrection in [Lev. 19:32](#),

³² You shall rise up before the grayheaded, and honor the aged, and you shall revere your God; I am the Lord.

Whereas this was a command under the Old Covenant, it was a prophetic promise under the New. At the Great White Throne, all will "rise up," not by their own will, but by the will of the Judge who summons them to the court. He calls; we answer, as Job says.

However, Daniel saw only a single resurrection at the end of the age, where all are raised for judgment at the throne. When we come to Revelation 20, we find that there are actually two resurrections, the first being limited to the few, and the second being universal. It is the universal resurrection at the end of the thousand years that Daniel saw.

The two resurrections, however, did not originate with John, but with Moses. It was hidden in the feast of Trumpets, and this was made clear by the Apostle Paul, who linked resurrection with the blowing of a trumpet ([1 Cor. 15:52](#); [1 Thess. 4:16](#)).

The Feast of Trumpets

The feasts of the Lord were divided into two groups. The spring feasts (Passover, Wave-sheaf offering, and Pentecost) were fulfilled in Christ's first work on earth; the autumn feasts (Trumpets, Atonement, and Tabernacles) are to be fulfilled in Christ's second coming. Because "*the dead in Christ shall rise FIRST*" ([1 Thess. 4:16](#)), we understand that the resurrection is the first event to fulfill the autumn feasts. It occurs, then, at the feast of Trumpets.

Here is where it is helpful to go back to the law and learn how the feast of Trumpets originated in the story of Israel in the wilderness. [Num. 10:1-4](#) says,

¹ The Lord spoke further to Moses, saying, ² Make yourself two trumpets of silver, of hammered work you shall make them; and you shall use them for summoning the congregation and for having the camps set out. ³ And when both[trumpets] are blown, all the congregation shall gather themselves to you at the doorway of the tent of meeting. ⁴ Yet if only one [trumpet] is blown, then the leaders, the heads of the divisions of Israel, shall assemble before you.

A single trumpet was blown to assemble the leaders, while both trumpets were blown to assemble the entire congregation. According to Josephus,

"Moses was the inventor of the form of their trumpet, which was made of silver" (*Antiquities of the Jews*, III, xii, 6).

In the context of Israel's wilderness journey, the trumpets were used to summon the people, but in the greater sense, it prophesied of the resurrection, where the dead will be summoned. This is the origin of the feast of Trumpets, and the two trumpets prophesy of two kinds of resurrection.

The Single Trumpet

Paul spoke of both resurrections, though he was not as clear as John in distinguishing them. John clearly speaks of two resurrections, showing how the first was limited and the second universal. But when Paul spoke to the believers being raised, he spoke of a single trumpet. [1 Cor. 15:52](#) says, "*the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised.*" [1 Thess. 4:16](#) says,

¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first.

This "trumpet" is used to summon the leaders, or rulers, not the entire congregation (church). It is the time of the first resurrection, for John tells us in [Rev. 20:4-6](#),

⁴ ... and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. ⁵ The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. ⁶ Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.

This agrees with [Num. 10:4](#), where we read that the leaders, or rulers, were summoned by the single trumpet.

The Two Trumpets

The passage in [Rev. 20:11](#) and [12](#) pictures the second resurrection in terms of the Great White Throne. This is the same scene that Daniel saw. Daniel saw men rising from the dead for judgment, and John makes it clear that all of the dead are raised. In fact, [Rev. 20:5](#) calls this group “*the rest of the dead*,” showing that no one is left unraised.

John must have remembered Jesus’ words, recorded in [John 5:28, 29](#),

²⁸ Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, ²⁹ and shall come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.

Clearly, this “hour” is the occasion of the general resurrection, wherein both trumpets are to be blown at the end of the thousand years. We know this, because “*all who are in the tombs*” are raised, and not just the few. Yet perhaps the most important revelation in Jesus’ statement is that both believers and unbelievers are raised for judgment. Believers are rewarded with “*a resurrection of life*,” while the evil ones are given “*a resurrection of judgment*.”

This tells us that there are believers in this resurrection, as well as in the first resurrection. The difference is that the leaders are summoned at the first resurrection to reign with Christ, while the rest of the believers must await their turn a thousand years later.

Did the Apostle Paul know this? Yes, for when his beliefs were called into question, he gave testimony to Governor Felix in [Acts 24:14, 15](#),

¹⁴ But this I admit to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect, I do serve the God of our fathers, believing everything that is in accordance with the Law, and that is written in the Prophets; ¹⁵ having a hope in God, which these men cherish themselves, that there shall certainly be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.

Though Paul does not explain this further, he makes it clear that he believed in a future resurrection that would include “*both the righteous and the wicked*.” He refrained from testifying of a resurrection that would include only those who would reign with Christ, because his accusers did not believe in such a resurrection. His purpose was to show the similarity of his beliefs, not the differences.

Yet when Paul wrote to the Corinthians and to the Thessalonian believers, he spoke of the first resurrection, wherein a single “trumpet” would be blown to summon them. It was assumed in those days that all believers were aspiring overcomers who cherished this hope.

Chapter 7: Life in the Millennium

John says nothing about life in the millennium, except for the fact that the resurrected ones will “*reign with Christ*” during that time. He passes quickly over a thousand years, eager, it seems, to speak of the climax of history—the great judgment of all mankind. I, on the other hand, am not in such a hurry, for I believe it is important for us to understand something about life on earth during this final “day” in the history of man.

In my early life in the church, I received a very good Christian education in a mission school. However, when it came to the topic of the Millennium, my teachers seemed short on knowledge and long on confusion. At times I was told that we would receive eternal life when we died and went to heaven. At other times I was told that we would receive our reward at the resurrection of the dead.

Likewise, we were taught that all souls were immortal, so our reward was not really immortality as such, but the *quality* of immortal life—either as eternal bliss or eternal torment.

The one thing we were never taught is the difference between eternal life and immortality, for this alone would have cleared up much of our confusion. We will deal with that topic shortly.

Mortal or Immortal Souls?

Immortality is a deathless condition. Most people believe that the body dies and that life as we know it is the process of dying. The Greeks, who were dualistic, believed that the body dies and that the soul is immortal. To them, the soul was spiritual, and so they used the terms *soul* and *spirit* interchangeably. The Hebrew view, however, says in [Ezekiel 18:4](#),

⁴ Behold, all souls [*nephesh*] are Mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is Mine. The soul who sins will die.

God claims ownership of all souls by right of creation, for Adam was made a living soul ([Gen. 2:7](#)). However, the soul is also responsible for sin, as we read here and in [Num. 15:28](#). Hence, when Paul says, “*all have sinned*” ([Rom. 3:23](#)), he means that every soul has sinned—not just the people in general, but specifically their *souls*. For this reason, divine judgment for sin is meted out against the soul, not merely upon the body, and because “*the wages of sin is death*” ([Rom. 6:23](#)), therefore, it is the soul that dies as a judgment for sin.

The Hebrew view is developed clearly in the law and its view about the use and purpose of blood. “*The nephesh (soul) of the flesh is in the blood*” ([Lev. 17:11](#)). The NASB translates [Lev. 17:14](#), “*For as for the life of all flesh, its blood is identified with its life.*” Both times the word is translated “life” but it literally means “soul.” The translators take it upon themselves to reinterpret *nephesh* to mean life itself, as if to imply that immortality resided in the soul, whereas the Scriptures teach that the *nephesh* has been sentenced to death because of Adam’s sin.

The Fleshly Soul and the Spiritual Spirit

The Greeks linked soul and spirit; the Hebrews *separated* soul and spirit ([Heb. 4:12](#)) and, instead, linked the soul to the body. The Greeks clearly separated the body from the soul, but the law of God linked them together, making both body and soul mortal. The phrase “*the soul of the flesh*” in [Lev. 17:11](#) should be understood as “the flesh’s soul” or simply “the fleshly soul.” In other words, the soul is fleshly, or carnal as well as mortal. The soul is not spiritual, as the Greeks imagined.

The Apostle Paul found it necessary to expound on this to the Corinthian church in order to change their Greek mindset. In [1 Cor. 2:10–16](#) he shows the distinction between the soul and the spirit, saying,

¹⁰ For to us God revealed them [the revelations of God] through the spirit; for the spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. ¹¹ For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man, which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. ¹² Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God.

In other words, the source of revelatory knowledge is “*the Spirit of God*,” which speaks to “*the spirit of the man*.” Paul continues in [1 Cor. 2:14](#), saying,

¹⁴ But a natural [*psykikos*, “soulish”] man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

The Greek word *psyche* (soul) is the equivalent of the Hebrew word *nephesh* in the Greek translation of the Old Testament (the Septuagint). Hence, when Paul speaks of the “natural man” (NASB), it more literally refers to the “soulish man” and is the equivalent of the “old man” or Adamic identity of our own soul. That “old man,” Paul says, is supposed to be “crucified” with Christ ([Rom. 6:6](#)), or put to death. That would not be possible if our souls were immortal.

In fact, The Emphatic Diaglott renders *psykikos* as “animal,” saying, “*an animal man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God*” ([1 Cor. 2:14](#)). Those translators recognize that the soul is part of the animal nature—that is, the flesh. The animalistic nature of the human soul is also the origin of the beast systems which have arisen in the world and which are described by both Daniel and John. Its selfishness and its survival instinct prevents the animalistic soul from hearing, obeying, or understanding spiritual things.

Paul sets forth the spirit of man in unity with the Spirit of God as being the “new man” or the new identity by which revelatory truth is communicated to us. Our spirit is capable of understanding spiritual things, while our soul is not. Hence, there are two “men” (or beings) in us: soul and spirit. These are distinct, for the soul is fleshly, while the spirit is spiritual. So Paul continues in [1 Cor. 2:15](#), [16](#),

¹⁵ But he who is spiritual [that is, our spirit-self] appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no man. ¹⁶ For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ.

Most people misunderstand Paul’s teaching, because they think he was referring to Christians vs. non-Christians as such. But Paul was personifying the soul and spirit, calling each a “man” (KJV) or “self” (NASB). The soul, being carnal, or fleshly, is incapable of receiving or of understanding spiritual things.

Hence, the source of revelation by which we commune with God is through our spiritual man.

Preserving Spirit, Soul, and Body

Paul says in [1 Thess. 5:23](#), [24](#),

²³ Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.

Clearly, we are a tripartite being, having spirit, soul, and body. Greek dualists thought that man was a physical body surrounding a spiritual soul. Hebrew revelation links the body and soul and distinguishes the spirit from them.

But Paul prays that all three parts of us would be “*preserved complete*,” that is, guarded, kept, so as not to escape or be lost or thrown away. In one short statement, Paul reveals the final reward of the righteous: all three parts will be “preserved.” This is the goal of the New Covenant, for it is based upon the One who calls us and has promised to

accomplish this. Paul affirms that “*He also will bring it to pass.*” In other words, it is His responsibility to fulfill His word (vow) as expressed in the New Covenant.

Paul calls Him “*the God of peace,*” implying that spirit, soul, and body must ultimately be reconciled in order to be “complete” and “without blame.” This is a very Hebrew view, for it restores all three parts of man that were damaged by Adam’s sin. The great inner “war” ([Rom. 7:23](#)) must end in reconciliation and peace.

Whereas the Greeks had no hope for the body, seeking to separate the spiritual soul from the body and live immortally in a purely spiritual (soulish) existence, the Hebrews saw God’s creation as “good” and had received the revelation of a bodily resurrection. Whereas the present form of body (as we know it) will pass, a new body and a new soul await us that will be at peace with the spirit.

Death is a Return

Scripture teaches us that death is a return to an original state. Breaking this down into its component parts, the body returns to dust, the spirit returns to God, and the soul returns to “hades,” a state of unconsciousness that is usually referred to as “sleep.”

This is most evident when we study the death of Jesus Himself. Joseph of Arimathea buried His body in his own tomb ([Matt. 27:58–60](#)). Jesus’ soul went to hades ([Acts 2:31](#)). His spirit went to God ([Luke 23:46](#)).

[James 2:26](#) tells us that “*the body without the spirit is dead.*” The body dies. Neither does the soul go to heaven, but the spirit. It is not the soul that is immortal, but the spirit. Both body and soul are said to die, but nowhere do we read that the spirit dies. Paul makes it clear that the spirit (i.e., the “spiritual man”) has a conscious mind that is distinct from the soul’s conscious (carnal) mind. Hence, the spiritual part of man returns to God in some state of consciousness, but the soulish mind dies with the body ([Eccl. 9:5](#)).

The separation of the three parts of man at the time of death begins to be reversed by the resurrection. Resurrection is a re-creation, a coming together again of spirit and body, even as God breathed into Adam’s dust body to create a living soul ([Gen. 2:7](#)). However, the quality of one’s life at resurrection will depend upon one’s relationship with God. As Jesus said in [John 5:29](#), some will receive “*a resurrection of life,*” while others “*a resurrection of judgment.*”

Since both groups come back to “life,” it is obvious that it is their *quality of life* that is different. Furthermore, with two resurrections, each having believers raised to life, it is obvious that there is also a distinction between believers and overcomers. There are, then, three main groups that we must consider: overcomers, believers, and unbelievers.

The Age to Come

The idea of a Messianic Age has been ingrained in Judaism for thousands of years. It was also called “The Age” and was identified with the great Sabbath Millennium, the seventh thousand-year period in earth’s history. It was to begin with the coming of the Messiah, and it was said that during that time, the glory of God would fill the earth.

Revelation 20 reflects this belief, though modified by Christian interpretations. One of the most misunderstood terms in the New Testament is the Greek term *aion* (“age”) and its adjective, *aionian* (“age-abiding, pertaining to an age”). It is usually translated “eternal” or “forever” or “everlasting,” but the word itself speaks of an indefinite and unknown period of time. It is best translated “age.” In fact, our English word *eon* comes from the Greek word *aion*.

Indefinite, Not Infinite Time

The point I want to make is this: when you read “everlasting” or “eternal” in the Bible, you cannot take these translations at face value. The Hebrew word *olam* and its Greek equivalent, *aionian*, properly mean “an age, an indefinite period of time.” In fact, in the end, it hardly matters how the Greeks used their word *aionian*, because (in

the Septuagint translation) it was simply the word which the rabbis chose to express the Hebrew concept of *olam*. Hence, when we read *aionian* in the New Testament, we ought to assign to it the definition of the Hebrew word *olam*.

The word *olam* comes from the root word *alam*, which means “to hide, to conceal.” When applied to time, it indicates a hidden, unknown period of time.

In other words, the length of time involved is indefinite, because the time may vary according to the context. It might mean a few days, as in [Jonah 2:6](#), or a few centuries, as with the “*perpetual priesthood*” given to Phinehas in [Num. 25:13](#). (The line of Phinehas was replaced by Zadok during the time of Solomon. See [1 Kings 2:27](#), [35](#).)

When applied to God, the Hebrew text normally uses the word *ad* (as in “*everlasting Father*” in [Isaiah 9:6, KJV](#)) or *qedem* (“*eternal God*,” as in [Deut. 33:27](#)). Yet *ad* comes from the root word *adah*, “pass by, advance.” And *qedem* means “ancient, eastward.” While these words may imply an eternal quality, this was not their primary meaning. Nor do these words really matter to us, because the key Hebrew word to study is *olam* and its root *alam*. Everywhere in the Septuagint, the rabbis used *aionian* as the equivalent of *olam*.

Indefinite time is not the same as infinite time. To insist that *olam* must always refer to infinite time is to limit its meaning in Scripture. In fact, this confusion has served to hide the very important prophecy of the Messianic Age and the reward of immortality during that Age.

Hebrew thinking in Jesus' day looked forward to the coming of the Messiah, in which He would rule the earth with His people in a Great Sabbath millennium. This idea was expressed in the phrase, “The Age” and “The *aionian* Kingdom” ([2 Peter 1:11](#)), i.e., the Kingdom Age.

Correct Translations

There are at least four modern translations that render the word *aionian* properly. Young's Literal Translation renders it “age-during.” Rotherham's The Emphasized Bible renders it “age-abiding.” Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott and The Concordant New Testament leave the original Greek word intact: *aionian*.

A good example is found in [Matt. 25:46 \(KJV\)](#), which says,

⁴⁶And these shall go away into everlasting [aionian] punishment; but the righteous into life eternal [aionian].

Both “everlasting” and “eternal” here come from the Greek word *aionian*. [The Cambridge Bible Commentary](#), by A.W. Argyle, comments on this verse, saying,

“46. eternal punishment, i.e., punishment characteristic of the Age to come, not meaning that it lasts for ever.

“eternal life, i.e., the life that belongs to the Age to come, the full abundant life which is fellowship with God.”

I show this so that no one thinks that I am pulling these things out of thin air. The word means an indefinite period of time, which, as Dr. Bullinger says in Appendix 129 of The Companion Bible, “*may be limited or extended as the context of each occurrence may demand.*”

For more quotations from the scholars, see [chapter 5](#) of my book, [The Judgments of the Divine Law](#).

Immortality in the Messianic Age

One of the most tragic casualties of this mistranslation of *aionian* has been the understanding of the Ages and specifically “The Age,” a reference to the Messianic Age to come. We read often of “*the age to come*” or “*in the ages to come*” ([Eph. 2:7](#)). Of particular note is [Mark 10:30](#), where Jesus says, “and in the *aion* to come, *aionian* life.”

The Revelation: Book 8 - Chapter 7: Life in the Millennium

Page 553 of 618

The age to come is what they called the Messianic Age. Those who receive *aionian* life are those raised in the first resurrection, because they will enjoy immortality during The Age. The rest of the dead, however, will not be so fortunate, but will have to wait until that Age is completed. In other words, they will not have *aionian* life (during the thousand years), but will instead be given immortality afterward.

Hence, the Bible everywhere urges us to attain life in “The Age.” Unfortunately, this phrase is usually mistranslated “eternal life,” as if to say “immortality.” Thus, we miss the real significance of the phrase. Scripture admonishes us to strive to be an overcomer so that we may receive immortality in the first resurrection. That way we have immortal life during “The Age” to come and do not have to wait for an extra thousand years before receiving this reward.

In short, *aionian* life specifically refers to TIMING, while immortality refers to a QUALITY of life. The reward of *aionian* life does not limit the overcomers’ reward, nor does their immortal state conclude at the end of the thousand years. Rather, their reward comes earlier than for others, and then continues beyond the Kingdom Age.

The condition after the Kingdom Age is expressed in the Hebrew phrase *olam va'ad*, “to the age and beyond” (used in [Exodus 15:18](#); [Psalm 9:5](#); [Psalm 10:16](#); [Psalm 45:6](#); and [Dan. 12:3](#)).

Conditions on Earth in the Messianic Age

As we have already shown, the Sabbath Millennium is designed to give the earth a rest from its labor—specifically, from its bondage to Mystery Babylon. This release, however, must be enforced by our Redeemer-King, because the Babylonian rulers “*have refused to let them go*” ([Jer. 50:33, 34](#)).

The coming of the rightful King of the earth changes the international order of things. First, He must secure a foothold in the earth. At least one nation must declare Him to be their King so that He may rule territory by His laws. He will not force Himself upon the nations, but yet the Holy Spirit will be poured out in order that whole nations will desire Him to be their King. His laws will then replace the laws of men, wherever there are disagreements and discrepancies. True justice will be the order of the day.

Isaiah is perhaps the main prophet who revealed the conditions in the Messianic Age. As farmland is purified of man-made chemicals, and as genetically modified crops are banned, health will be restored to the earth. Over time, the earth will be restored to its original pristine condition, and as health improves, life spans will increase. [Isaiah 65:20](#) says,

²⁰ No longer will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his days; for the youth will die at the age of one hundred and the one who does not reach the age of one hundred shall be thought accursed.

In other words, if a man dies at the age of 100, it will be said that he died too young—perhaps because he was “accursed” in some way.

As far as international relations is concerned, [Isaiah 2:2, 3](#) says,

² Now it will come about that in the last days the mountain of the house of the Lord will be established as the chief of the mountains, and will be raised above the hills; and all the nations will stream to it. ³ And many peoples will come and say, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that He may teach us concerning His ways, and that we may walk in His paths.” For the law will go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

We see from this that people from other nations will not be *forced* to come and learn. They will *desire* to come and learn the ways of God, as revealed in His laws. This motivation is already prevalent among the true believers even today. Those who have no desire to “*grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*” ([2 Peter 3:18](#)) are probably religionists of Christian persuasion, but not genuine believers. Growth is evidence of life, and if there is no growth, how can there be life?

⁴ And He will judge between the nations, and will render decisions for many peoples; and they will hammer their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they learn war.

It will be an age of peace, as the nations conform to the image of Christ, the Prince of Peace. Any disputes between nations will be settled justly and peaceably by the wisdom of the law.

Perhaps the important thing to understand is that it is *not until the Great White Throne judgment* that all men are summoned for judgment. Only then will Christ's jurisdiction be granted over the whole earth. Every knee will bow at that time, for no one will have any choice but to submit to the King and the judgment of His law.

Only then will men from the beginning of time be held accountable for the sins that they committed during their life time on earth. Only then will the judgments of the law be enforced fully, and all who failed to claim Jesus Christ's death as payment for their sins will be sentenced to be enslaved to the righteous.

This will inaugurate a New World Order. Every tongue will confess allegiance to Christ ([Isaiah 45:23](#), [24](#)). Hence, even though all who are sentenced to slavery will have to pay or to work off their debt, they will not be abused, for it is unlawful to abuse a slave ([Exodus 21:26](#), [27](#)). Instead, the righteous will rule over them as Christ would rule, having His character and love for all men. They will teach their slaves by words and by example. [Isaiah 26:8](#), [9](#) says,

⁸ Indeed, while following the way of Thy judgments, O Lord, we have waited for Thee eagerly; Thy name, even Thy memory, is the desire of our souls. ⁹ At night my soul longs for Thee; indeed, my spirit within me seeks Thee diligently; for when the earth experiences Thy judgments, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.

Chapter 8: The Purpose for Satan's Release

In [Revelation 20:7–9](#) we read,

⁷ And when the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, ⁸ and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore. ⁹ And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them.

Satan's sentence is only for a thousand years. Satan does not *escape*, but is "*released*." Since a thousand years of legal time is just 980 years (or twenty Jubilee cycles), it may be that the final twenty years will be used to deceive the nations and to conclude this final battle of earth's history.

Legal and Chronological Time

I explained the difference between chronological time and legal time in [chapter 2](#) of my book, [Secrets of Time](#). When certain years are overlaid on each other, the laws of time treat those years as double time. Every Jubilee year, for example, is both the fiftieth year of the previous cycle and the first year of the next Jubilee cycle. Hence a period of ten Jubilees is only 490 years of chronological time, but it is actually 500 years of legal time.

Furthermore, 120 Jubilees is 5,880 years of chronological time, but it is 6,000 years of legal time. The year 1986–1987 was the 120th Jubilee from Adam. By actual chronology it was only the year 5880, but by legal time it was 6,000 years from Adam. God is using this legal maneuver in order to shorten the time for the sake of the elect ([Matt. 24:22](#); [Mark 13:20](#)). Jesus implied that the earth would be destroyed if the present world order were allowed to continue until the year 2106–2107, which is the actual chronological 6,000 years from Adam. So He has shortened the time by establishing the principle of legal time.

This principle of the laws of time is seen most clearly when studying the amount of time that the kings of Judah ruled in Jerusalem. In [chapter 7 of Secrets of Time](#), I showed how Judah was held liable for 434 years in which they had kept no Sabbath years or Jubilees. Their liability was for 62 Sabbath years and 8 Jubilees, and for this reason God sentenced them to a 70-year captivity in Babylon.

However, the actual chronology of this same period was only 385 years, because many of those kings ruled for some years as co-regents with their father. When two kings ruled at the same time, the time of legal liability was doubled during those years. If it were not for the factor of legal time, God's sentence would have been excessive and unjust.

If the legal time factor plays such a prominent role toward the end of 6,000 years, then perhaps this same principle plays a role toward the end of 7,000 years. It is too soon to say for sure, but it is possible that Satan will be given twenty years in which to deceive Gog and Magog into thinking that they are powerful enough to regain control over the earth. This would also be enough time to plan and to muster support for the final war.

Outer Darkness

John implies that the nations of Gog and Magog will lead the attack upon Christ's Kingdom. Whether or not other nations join forces with them is not stated specifically, but they are certainly numerous, for we read that "*the number of them is like the sand of the seashore.*"

In other words, during the thousand years, the Kingdom of God will not fill the whole earth, even though [Dan. 2:35](#) says that the Kingdom, pictured as a great "stone," will grow to become a great mountain and will ultimately "*fill the whole earth.*" I can find no prophecy giving the precise proportion that will be inhabited by Christ's kingdom, but it

is clear from [Rev. 20:8](#) that during the entire thousand years there will be nations with very large populations that remain outside of Christ's dominion.

This is the "outer darkness" that Jesus spoke about in [Matt. 8:12](#), [22:13](#), and [25:30](#). In [Matt. 8:10-12](#) Jesus mentioned "outer darkness" after commenting on the faith of the Roman centurion:

¹⁰ Now when Jesus heard this, He marveled, and said to those who were following, "Truly I say to you, I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel. ¹¹ And I say to you, that many shall come from east and west and recline at the table with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven; ¹² but the sons of the kingdom shall be cast out into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

While many identify this "outer darkness" with a burning hell, it is actually the part of the earth that is outside of the Kingdom. The Kingdom is full of light, as we read in [Rev. 21:25](#),

²⁵ And in the daytime (for there shall be no night there) its gates shall never be closed.

So the "outer darkness" describes the territory of non-Kingdom nations who do not want Jesus Christ to be their king, nor do they want to adopt His righteous laws. It appears that Gog and Magog are set forth as a coalition of nations forming this outer darkness. Although it is described as a place of "*weeping and gnashing of teeth*," it is not a torture pit, but a place of oppression and sorrow, much like we see even today in many parts of the earth.

Many too have misunderstood the "*gnashing of teeth*," thinking it is a reaction to pain. In fact, clenched teeth is a sign of *anger*, as we read in [Job 16:9](#),

⁹ His anger has torn me and hunted me down; he has gnashed at me with his teeth; my adversary glares at me.

This shows that those who are "*cast out into the outer darkness*" are unrepentant and are angry that they would be denied citizenship in the Kingdom. The Kingdom of God does not welcome ungodly laws, multiple gods, freedom to sin, or loyalty to other kings.

Satan's Purpose

Many years ago, while in the mission school, I asked my teacher why God would release Satan at the end of the thousand years. It seemed odd for God to do this, knowing that he would only cause havoc and cause World War Whatever. Her explanation was that the children who were born during the thousand years needed to be tempted even as we have been tempted by Satan prior to his incarceration.

Even as a child, I thought her explanation was inadequate, but as I had no further insight, I had to accept this for the moment. In later life, as I gained greater understanding of the Scriptures, I came to see that God often induces men and nations to attack God's people. God's motives are quite clear when we study the context of such passages.

For example, in [1 Kings 11:9](#) we read about Solomon's idolatry later in his life,

⁹ Now the Lord was angry with Solomon because his heart was turned away from the Lord, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice.

God then sent a prophet to tell him that his kingdom would be divided. In order to accomplish this judgment upon Solomon and the monarchy of Judah in general, [1 Kings 11:14](#) says,

¹⁴ Then the Lord raised up an adversary [*satan*] to Solomon, Hadad the Edomite; he was of the royal line in Edom.

In this case Hadad was called a *satan*, which is the Hebrew word for “adversary.” There are spiritual adversaries and earthly adversaries, just as there are angels (“messengers”) and earthly messengers. In this case God found Hadad useful, because, as the passage explains, King David had defeated Edom and ruled over them ([2 Sam. 8:14](#)). King Hadad himself had fled to Egypt, where he found favor with Pharaoh and even married the queen’s sister.

Years later, he returned from exile, and Solomon lost control of Edom. But this was not the only *satan* that God raised up against Solomon. [1 Kings 11:23–25](#) says,

²³ God also raised up another adversary [*satan*] to him, Rezon the son of Eliada, who had fled from his lord Hadadezer king of Zobah... ²⁵ So he was an adversary [*satan*] to Israel all the days of Solomon, along with the evil that Hadad did; and he abhorred Israel and reigned over Aram.

There are other passages where God raised up *satans* to execute judgment upon Israel or upon other nations. However, God does not do this without *legal cause*, or *occasion*. It is always done in accordance with His law.

Divine Judgment on the Philistines

During the time when the Philistines ruled over Israel, God saw fit to bring a certain level of judgment upon the Philistines. We are not told specifically what the Philistines did to warrant this, since God had raised them up to judge Israel’s own violation of the covenant ([Judges 13:1](#)). But nonetheless, God raised up Samson to judge both the Israelites and the Philistines.

In Judges 14 we read how Samson had befriended the Philistines and even wanted to marry one of the young women from Timnath, a Philistine city. Samson’s parents objected, of course, but then we read something strange in [Judges 14:4](#),

⁴ However, his father and mother did not know that it was of the Lord, for He was seeking an occasion against the Philistines

When God brings judgment, He must always have “*an occasion*,” that is, a legal cause for judgment. He cannot judge for arbitrary reasons, for this would go against His will and even against His own nature, as expressed in His law.

This principle shows us why God releases Satan at the end of the thousand years in [Rev. 20:7](#). Essentially, God will seek occasion against Gog and Magog by inducing them to attack the Kingdom of Light. For a thousand years, Gog and Magog will remain peaceful, but yet their hearts will remain stubborn and angry. Jesus is the Prince of Peace and will not attack Gog and Magog without legal cause.

The purpose of God is for Christ to rule the whole world, for He is the Heir of all things, and all things must be put under His feet ([1 Cor. 15:25](#)). Hence, God releases Satan, so he may expose their hearts and act upon their base motives. The people in outer darkness and the leaders of Gog and Magog will harbor malice and anger (“gnashing teeth”) against Christ and His Kingdom for nearly a thousand years, but they lack a tempter to induce them to action.

Satan is released to tempt Gog and Magog to act upon their anger, in order that Christ may lawfully take over the remaining parts of the earth and incorporate them into His Kingdom. In that way, the “stone” kingdom finally fills the whole earth ([Dan. 2:35](#)).

Once He has taken control over the entire earth, then the stage is set for the Great White Throne to bring the final judgment, not only of the living, but also of the dead.

Chapter 9: The Fate of the Devil

[Revelation 20:10](#) says,

¹⁰ And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented [*basanizo*, “imprisoned”] day and night forever and ever [for the ages of the ages].

Here “the devil” is the equivalent of “Satan” in verse 7, who deceived the nations into declaring war against the Kingdom of God. The only difference is that “devil” means *an accuser*, while “Satan” means *an adversary*. Both are legal terms that refer to a prosecutor—one who opposes the counselor for the defense.

In the divine court, Jesus is the Judge, and the Holy Spirit is the *parakletos*, which is translated “Comforter” ([John 15:26, KJV](#)), “Helper” (NASB), and “Consoler” (CV). In a legal sense, a *parakletos* is a counselor and advocate in a court of law, who is called “*the Spirit of truth*” in the sense that he is called to discern truth from lies, especially when a false accuser (or adversary) arises against a client.

In the case of the devil in [Rev. 20:10](#), who was released to deceive the nations and to induce them to attack the Kingdom, God sought legal cause against Gog and Magog and any of their allies. Such a tactic is not unusual, for we read in [1 Kings 22:19–23](#) how the prophet Micaiah saw how God commissioned a lying spirit to entice King Ahab to go into battle against Syria so that he would be killed.

To the world, Ahab was merely killed in battle, but to those who could see the proceedings in the divine court, Ahab was sentenced to death by the great Judge, and Naaman the Syrian general was called to be his unwitting executioner (Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, VII, xv, 5).

The point is that the “lying spirit” was not outside of God’s authority and control. He had a purpose and function in the judicial process—in this case, to induce Ahab’s prophets to tell him what he wanted to hear, so that he would go willingly and submit to his executioner.

The devil functions as an accuser in order that all sinners might be accused and found guilty in the divine court. Yet the law has also provided a way for sinners to escape judgment, if they follow the advice of their Counselor in presenting their case to the Judge. Jesus has paid the penalty for their sin already, and if the penalty has been paid, then there is no more condemnation ([Rom. 8:1](#)).

The Devil Imprisoned

The NASB translates [Rev. 20:10](#) to imply that the devil will be “*tormented day and night forever and ever*.” However, as we have already shown, the word translated “tormented” is *basanizo*, which is the verb form of the noun *basanistes*, the common word for a jailor or prison warden. He was euphemistically called a “tormentor,” because under the laws of men, he was often called upon to elicit information by the use of torture.

However, our omniscient God already knows the truth, and when He adjures men to tell all that they know ([Leviticus 5:1](#)), they cannot help but speak the whole truth. God needs no torture to elicit truth. The New Testament word is used only because it was the common term in those days for a jailor, one who imprisons others. And the verb form *basanizo*, though it literally means “torment,” in practical terms it means “to imprison.”

The Ages of the Ages

The devil, beast, and false prophet are imprisoned “*day and night*.” This too is a Hebraism that means *continuously*. The Hebrews made a distinction between night and day. When a man is said to work for six days, we understand that

his nights are excluded. When Muslims fast for a whole month at Ramadan, it is understood that they may feast at night. Hence, they fast for a month, but they do not fast “day and night.”

So in the case of the devil’s imprisonment, we understand that he gets no time off, but remains imprisoned continuously. How long? Both the NASB and the KJV say “*forever and ever*,” but this is not correct. The Greek text reads *tous aionas ton aionon*, which The Emphatic Diaglott renders, “*for the ages of the ages*.”

Young’s Literal Translation reads, “*to the ages of the ages*.” Rotherham’s The Emphasized Bible reads, “*unto the ages of the ages*.” The Concordant Version reads “*for the eons of the eons*.”

There is no *kai* (“and”) in this Greek phrase, so it is inconceivable how some translators could render it “forever AND ever.” It is a reference to ages, which are indefinite in length, not infinite. The “*ages of the ages*” refers to the greatest of all ages, even as the “Song of Songs” claims to be the greatest Song, and the Holy of Holies is the Most Holy Place.

Therefore, [Rev. 20:10](#) tells us that the devil is to be imprisoned continuously for the rest of earth-time, that is, the climactic ages of earth’s history which come *after the millennium*. In my understanding, these “*ages of the ages*” refer to the “weeks” of 7,000 years each, leading to the [Creation Jubilee](#) after a total of 49,000 years.

There is no direct biblical statement telling us this, but a simple look at the [laws of time](#) (based on Sabbaths) makes this plain from my perspective. There are 49 days from the wave-sheaf offering to Pentecost, or 50 days inclusively, and there are 7 Sabbath years leading to the Jubilee, or 50 years inclusively. When viewed on the level of creation itself, where a “day” is a thousand years, then the [Creation Jubilee](#) surely comes after seven great weeks, or 49,000 years.

Even Origen, the great theologian of the early third century, confessed ignorance as to how long the time would be between the White Throne judgment and the reconciliation of all creation. In his *Commentary in the Epistle to the Romans*, VIII, 11, he wrote,

“But how long this purification which is wrought out by penal fire shall endure, or for how many eons it shall torment sinners, He only knows to Whom all judgment is committed by the Father.”

Will the Devil be Reconciled?

As for the ultimate fate of the devil, John says nothing here. Will he be released from his prison at the [Creation Jubilee](#)? Many in the early church believed so and taught that he too would be reconciled to God at the end of time. They cited [Phil. 2:10](#), which says,

¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth.

They also cited [Col. 1:20](#), where Paul spoke of all of creation being reconciled to God, “*whether things on earth or things in heaven*.” Those “*on earth*” are men, they said, those “*under the earth*” (i.e., underground) are the dead, and those “*in heaven*” are angels and spiritual beings. So Clement of Alexandria (150–213 A.D.) commented on [1 John 2:2](#), writing,

“and not only for our sins,” that is, for those of the faithful, is the Lord the Propitiator does he say, ‘but also for the whole world.’ He, indeed, saves all; but some He saves converting them by punishments; others, however, who follow voluntarily He saves with dignity of honour; so that ‘ever knee should bow to Him, of things in heaven, or things on earth, and things under the earth’—that is, angels and men.”

Didymus the Blind (308–395 A.D.) wrote in his *Commentary on 1 Peter*, III,

“As mankind by being reclaimed from their sins are to be subjected to Christ in the dispensation appointed for the Salvation of all, so the angels will be reduced to obedience by the correction of their vices.”

Even Jerome (340–419 A.D.), who translated the Scriptures into Latin (*The Vulgate*), in one of his earlier writings, said,

“In the end of all things the whole body which has been dissipated will be restored... What I mean is, the fallen Angel will begin to be that which he was created, and man, who was expelled from Paradise, will once more be restored to the tilling of Paradise. These things will then take place universally.” (In [Eph. 4:16](#))

In his later years, Jerome was caught up in the great controversy in the year 400, wherein the teaching of Universal Reconciliation began to be suppressed by the bishop of Rome and the exceedingly corrupt bishop of Alexandria. Jerome wrote to the bishop of Rome, asking him what doctrinal position to take, and when the Roman bishop told him to argue against Universal Reconciliation, he complied, though it went directly against his own beliefs.

Later church councils (from the fifth century on) condemned as heresy the belief that the devil was to be saved in the end. Strangely enough, however, for centuries they failed to condemn Universal Reconciliation itself, perhaps because the most revered church theologians taught this, including Gregory of Nyassa, called “Father of Fathers,” and Gregory of Nazianzen, called “The Theologian.” Nonetheless, as the power and influence of Rome grew, The Greek theologians’ view of Universal Reconciliation was gradually replaced by the Latin concept of eternal torment, popularized mostly by Augustine in the fifth century.

Setting aside the beliefs and interpretations of the early church, the deeper question is whether God intends to treat spiritual beings in the same manner as He treats humanity. Perhaps the underlying question is whether or not angels are created beings, for if they are part of God’s creation, then they are part of the “*all things*” that must be reconciled. (Note that in [Col. 1:16](#) God is said to be the Creator of “*all things*,” and in verse 20 the same “*all things*” is to be reconciled to God.)

Even so, reconciliation means that all of creation is in harmony and unity with God. It does not mean that bugs, flies, and rodents will be resurrected to immortal life. Even the theologians of the early church limited reconciliation to all *rational* creatures. But this leaves open the possibility that the devil is treated differently from mankind. While I recognize that the majority of the early church believed that the reconciliation of “things in heaven” included the devil and all fallen angels, I am of the opinion that they may have misunderstood the manner in which the heavens are to be reconciled.

If the devil was created to be God’s prosecutor (accuser) and executioner of divine judgment, his job will end when there are no more people to be prosecuted. Will his job then shift to something more positive, or will he lose his existence in the eradication of all evil? I leave this for our readers to decide, because either way all of creation will be reconciled, and God will be all in all.

Chapter 10: The Great White Throne

[Revelation 20:11, 12](#) says,

¹¹ And I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.

This is the second resurrection, and it includes all who have ever lived since the beginning of time. It is obviously different from the first resurrection, which was limited to those called as rulers in The Messianic Age, i.e., the Great Sabbath Millennium. The prophets usually treat this judgment as the climax of the age, although there is yet a greater climax later at the Restoration of All Things.

Nonetheless, the Great White Throne is where every knee bows and every tongue confesses allegiance to Christ ([Isaiah 45:23, 24, 25](#); [Phil. 2:9–11](#)). In other words, it is the moment of truth, when all men acknowledge Christ as King and become believers, confessing “*Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*” Paul also tells us in [1 Cor. 12:3](#),

³ Therefore I make known to you, that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, “Jesus is accursed”; and no one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, when all men at the Great White Throne confess allegiance to Christ, calling Him “Lord,” they can only do so “*by the Holy Spirit.*” Hence, when every knee bows at the Great White Throne, they do not bow against their will, but bow as a reaction to the leading of the Holy Spirit within them. In other words, they will not only be justified by faith in Him, but they will also be filled with the Holy Spirit at that time.

Even so, this will not cancel their judgment, for they, like all believers, must experience the baptism of fire so that the Holy Spirit can bring them to spiritual *maturity*. They will experience Passover when they confess Jesus Christ and bow to Him, but Pentecost and its baptism of fire is a longer process, where men learn obedience until they come into agreement. So also will this characterize the age of judgment that follows the Great White Throne.

The First Judgment upon Adam

The last battle of the Kingdom Age gives God the legal right to reclaim all other parts of the earth by right of conquest and according to the laws of war. As the Creator, He always owned the earth, but in a legal sense, it was sold to another in payment of debt—the debt that Adam incurred when he sinned at the beginning.

Such a sale would have been unnecessary, except for the fact that Adam had been given authority, or “dominion” in [Genesis 1:26](#). In delegating authority, God did not give up His sovereignty, but yet it subjected the entire ordeal to a legal process. This process took time and was subject to the laws of time, a long Jubilee cycle of 49,000 years, divided into seven “week” periods.

Adam’s entire estate (the whole earth) was sold to a nameless buyer in order for payment to be made, according to the legal principle that Jesus set forth in His parable in [Matt. 18:25](#),

²⁵ But since he did not have the means to repay [the debt], his lord commanded him to be sold, along with his wife and children and all that he had, and repayment to be made.

By the law of authority, not only Adam, but his entire estate was sold to pay the debt, and even this was insufficient. So Adam and his family too were sold into slavery to Sin, and Paul acknowledges this in [Rom. 7:14](#), saying, “*I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin.*” He treats sin as a slave owner, and his flesh (Adamic identity) as the slave who is commanded to do his will by “*the law of sin*” ([Rom. 7:25](#)).

Because the law expresses the mind, will, and nature of God Himself, He was unwilling to override the law or to put it away. Instead, He began the long legal process of reclaiming His creation. But because the law commanded that slaves labor for six years ([Exodus 21:2](#)), mankind had to remain in bondage for 6,000 years. The same law, however, commanded a release from labor in the Sabbath year, and this gave God the legal right to institute the first resurrection, setting free the first group of believers known as overcomers.

But the law acknowledges that some debts require more than six years of labor and that some men are to be enslaved until the year of Jubilee. Hence, after the Sabbath year, those who are yet debtors must return to work at the beginning of the eighth year. This is the legal background to the Great White Throne judgment at the start of the eighth millennium, in which the majority of mankind is judged and must continue their labor until the Creation Jubilee.

Understanding the law also helps us to define the “lake of fire” in practical terms, as we will see shortly.

The Law of Ownership

The Great White Throne judgment is based upon God’s right of ownership. God owns all things by right of creation, but the use of these things is limited by law. We have already shown how creation was sold by the law of sin as payment for Adam’s debt. This put limits on God’s sovereignty in a legal sense, but not so much that God would be defeated. It only meant that God was limited by His own righteous nature to reconcile all things over a period of time in a lawful process.

Hence, in the end God is a resounding Winner. He will not lose most of the creation that He owns and loves, as so many theologians have thought. All that Adam lost was lost temporarily on account of his authority; but God never gave up His sovereignty, which is greater than all authority. His sovereignty will prevail in the end, and God will once again be “*all in all*” ([1 Cor. 15:28](#)).

One of the laws of ownership is found in Jesus’ short parable in [Matt. 13:44](#),

⁴⁴ The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has, and buys that field.

Jesus is the “man” who has found hidden treasure. Israel was called God’s “*peculiar treasure*” ([Exodus 19:5 KJV](#)), and specifically “*those who fear the Lord and who esteem His name*” will be God’s “*jewels*” ([Mal. 3:16, 17](#)). But the man in the parable did not steal the treasure. In order to have the right to claim the treasure, he had to buy the field where the treasure was hidden. So Jesus gave up “*all that he has*” (that is, He gave His very life) in order to buy the field and obtain the treasure.

In one simple parable, Jesus set forth the divine plan. Earlier, He said in [Matt. 13:38](#), “*the field is the world*.” Hence, in order to obtain the treasure (“*those who fear the Lord*”), He purchased the whole field (“*the world*”). It was the only lawful way to get what He wanted, for if He had taken the treasure without first owning the field, He would have violated His own law. Jesus will not sin that grace may abound. No matter how much He desires to possess the treasure, He will obtain it in a lawful manner.

In fact, it is His integrity and righteousness that ensures the stability of the universe, for if One who is sovereign should violate the law (character of God), the universe would be sold into sin, and there would be no one qualified to redeem it.

This principle of ownership is seen further at the last battle against Gog and Magog in [Rev. 20:9](#). It is God’s intent to take ownership of the whole earth, but He must do so in a lawful manner. By releasing the devil to tempt Gog and Magog (working on their inner anger and resentment) to attack the Kingdom, Jesus fights back by the law of self-defense against their unlawful aggression.

This victory and conquest puts the rest of the world under the lawful control of Jesus Christ, allowing Him to take the hidden treasure from “*the field*” that He then owns. In this case, the hidden treasure is “*the rest of the dead*” ([Rev. 20:5](#)), and summoning them all in the second resurrection is the moment when He claims the rest of the treasure hidden (or buried) in the field.

The Final Impediment of the Law

The judgment, then, is based legally upon God’s ownership of the entire world and all that is in it. God finally has the lawful right to fulfill His passion to save all mankind and restore all things in creation. At that point in time, the law’s impediments are largely removed—not entirely, however, for He must still judge those who are raised in order to fulfill all righteousness. Jesus said in [Matt. 5:17, 18](#),

**¹⁷ Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill.
¹⁸ For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished.**

As long as God’s judgments are relevant, the law stands. It is only when all things have been reconciled, and all are in agreement with God and His nature, that the law will no longer need to judge anyone. When there is no judgment to be done, then the law will remain only as the definition of every man’s nature, for the law will be written on every heart ([Heb. 8:10](#)). In other words, the law will be passive, rather than active. No longer will it need to be taught, because all will fulfill it in all that they do, and because no one will violate it, there will be no more judgment for sin.

But between the Great White Throne and the Creation Jubilee, there is still much judgment to be done. The “*fiery law*,” as Moses called it in [Deut. 33:2 \(KJV\)](#), will be active during this time, enforcing obedience whenever necessary, until all have come into agreement by nature.

The Ancient of Days

John tells us in [Rev. 20:11](#), “*I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it.*” He does not tell us WHO was sitting upon that throne. Yet because he saw the same scene that Daniel saw, we may identify Him as “*the Ancient of Days*” ([Dan. 7:9](#)). The Concordant Version calls Him “*the Transferrer of Days.*”

Both translations are correct, showing a double meaning. He is “old,” or “ancient,” or, as it may be rendered, “advanced in years,” but He also transfers authority from one to another. As the “days” advance in time, there is a shift in authority, first from Babylon to the saints of the Most High, and secondly from the nations in general to the One sitting on the Great White Throne.

Daniel and John each have their unique perspective. One sees details that the other does not, but both have enough revelation in common to let us know that they are seeing the same scene.

Who, then, is sitting upon this Great White Throne? [Dan. 7:13, 14](#) tells us,

¹³ I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, and He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. ¹⁴ And to Him was given dominion, glory, and a kingdom ...

Hence, we see two Beings here. The first is the Ancient of Days, but the second is Christ, who comes “*with the clouds of heaven.*” When Jesus was adjured by the high priest to speak the whole truth in the court of law where He was being tried, He testified in [Matt. 26:64](#), “*hereafter you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.*”

According to [Luke 22:70](#), the Council then asked Jesus point blank, “*Are you the Son of God then?*” And He said to them, “*Yes, I am.*” Thus, Jesus identified Himself as the One to whom the Ancient of Days was to give “*dominion*,

glory, and a kingdom.” He was then crucified on a charge of blasphemy for supposedly giving false testimony under oath.

Why Authority was Delegated to Christ

Daniel’s information ends at that point, and John says even less about the identity of the One on the throne. The important revelation to John is that the dead were being judged. Yet there is no question that John knew that the Ancient of Days had delegated all judgment to the Son, for we read Jesus’ own words in [John 5:21–23](#),

²¹ For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes. ²² For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son, ²³ in order that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.

We may conclude, then, that the Father is the Ancient of Days who sits on the Great White Throne, but He has delegated (or transferred) all authority to the Son, Who is called to judge all men. Further, because Jesus became the sacrificial victim for the sin of the whole world ([1 John 2:2](#)), He earned the right to forgive or to condemn. Hence, “*the Son also gives life to whom He wishes.*”

This transfer of authority to judge was based on the Law of Victims Rights. So we see that even though men have all sinned against the Ancient of Days, as soon as Jesus took the responsibility of all sin upon Himself, He also received the right to forgive or to condemn. The Law of Victims Rights is the legal reason WHY the judgment was delegated to the Son.

We know Christ’s ultimate intention, of course, for He stated it while on the cross, “*Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing*” ([Luke 23:34](#)). His intention is to forgive, but this does not eliminate a certain level of judgment. Judgment holds men accountable in order to train them in the ways of righteousness and justice. It is only when we understand that judgment is temporary that we can see how Christ intends to balance judgment with mercy and to bring about His ultimate goal to forgive and to save all whose sins victimized Him.

Fear of His Face

[Revelation 20:11](#) says,

¹¹ And I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it from whose presence [*prosopon*, “face”] earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them.

This statement seems strange. Why would earth and heaven want to flee from the face or presence of God? Is the Ancient of Days to be dreaded, or loved? Once again, we must interpret this with Hebrew eyes, rather than Greek or any other viewpoint. The Greek word *prosopon* means “face,” and it carries the meaning of the Hebrew word *panah* and its plural, *paniyim*. It literally means “face, faces,” but it is often untranslatable. For example, [Exodus 34:23](#) says,

²³ Three times a year all your males are to appear before [*paniyim*, the face of] the Lord God, the God of Israel.

They were instructed to appear before the face of the Lord God. To be in front of one’s face was to be in one’s presence. So the NASB translates [Rev. 20:11](#), “from whose presence earth and heaven fled away.” The translation is accurate, though not literal.

It was commonly believed in ancient times that if anyone saw God face to face, he would die. Such a belief was accurate in that no mortal, sinful flesh can live in God’s presence ([Exodus 33:20](#)). But what about immortal people who are righteous, or those who have been imputed righteous? We have been promised the ability to see God and live.

When Moses' face glowed as He returned from the Mount ([Exodus 34:29](#)), the presence (face) of God was in his face, and this defined the promise of God to all of us. The Israelites fled from Moses' face until He used a veil to hide the glory of God ([Exodus 34:30](#)). The old man of flesh cannot help but flee from the presence of God. The flesh lacks the strength of will to stand before God's face. And since sin has permeated both heaven (the second heaven) and earth, both are said to flee before God's face.

Yet at the resurrection, all flesh is summoned to appear before God's face at the Great White Throne. This is a command from the Judge, not a suggestion that might coax sinners to come. John's view of the summons is thus contrasted to the flesh's desire to flee, showing that there is no place to run and hide. Hence, "*no place [to flee] was found for them.*" This is a statement that shows that the will of God overrules the will of man. Man is arrested and brought before the Judge, and man's will is powerless at this point in history.

The Ancient of Days—the Old Man—has come, and all will rise, as the law prophesies in [Lev. 19:32](#). By the Old Covenant, the law *commands* men to rise, but in the end, the will of man may or may not comply with the law. But by the New Covenant, the law is *a promise* and prophecy, based on the will of God, which the will of man cannot withstand.

The Great and the Small

John continues in [Revelation 20:12](#),

¹² And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.

We know from John's earlier statement that the overcomers are raised a thousand years before the rest of the dead. So it is evident that at the Great White Throne, the rest of the dead who are raised include everyone other than the overcomers. Jesus tells us in [John 5:28, 29](#) that this general resurrection will include both believers and unbelievers. The believers will receive "life" at that time, while the unbelievers will receive "judgment." Paul confirms this in [Acts 24:14, 15](#).

Paul also tells us in [1 Cor. 3:11–15](#) that the believers—those who have laid Christ as their Foundation—will be "*saved yet so as through fire.*" If they built upon their Foundation with works made of "*wood, hay, straw,*" their works will be burned up. If they built with works of faith made of "*gold, silver, precious stones,*" the fire will not consume such works, and they will be rewarded accordingly.

Therefore, "*the great and the small*" are judged "*according to their works,*" whether they are believers or unbelievers. But the believers, having faith in Christ, receive immortal "life," even if many of their works were not done in obedience to His will. We are told very little about the actual judgment upon such believers. The biblical writers presume that we have already studied the law, so we know how sinners are judged.

It is fortunate for believers that the fire of God is not literal. All who have experienced Pentecost have entered the fire of God even in their life on earth. It is the baptism of fire, prophesied by John the Baptist in [Matt. 3:11, 12](#), which was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost ([Acts 2:3](#)). The purpose of the Holy Spirit's fire is to function "*as a smelter*" ([Mal. 3:3](#)) to purify and "*refine them like gold and silver.*"

In other words, the "*gold, silver, precious stones*" going through the fire on the day of judgment is not to be viewed as a pile of works being set on fire outside of us. Instead, our works are part of us, whether spiritual or fleshly, and therefore we need to be purified and refined.

John the Baptist changes the metaphor to wheat whose chaff is being burned, while saving the edible portion of the wheat which is stored in God's "barn" ([Matt. 3:12](#)).

We have been given the feast of Pentecost as a divine gift of the Holy Spirit, not to destroy us by its baptism of fire, but to purify and refine us and to prepare us for the feast of Tabernacles. If we allow Pentecost to do its work within us, then we will be overcomers who qualify for the first resurrection, no longer needing the fire to refine us at the Great White Throne.

Just because we seek the feast of Tabernacles does not mean we despise Passover or Pentecost. Instead, we are called to be justified through Passover and then to receive the Holy Spirit's baptism of fire, embracing the often-painful burning of our flesh, in order to obtain, with all overcomers, "*a better resurrection*" ([Heb. 11:35](#)).

Chapter 11: The Books

When God summons all of the dead at the last resurrection, [Rev. 20:12](#) says that “*books were opened*” to judge humanity. The same verse says further, “*the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.*” Some have speculated that these “books” were the records of all their deeds during their life on earth. We are not told, but every court of law judges men by the standard of the law of the land.

Hence, it is more likely that these “books” are the books of the divine law. Even so, there are certainly records of men’s deeds presented in the divine court. They are normally called *charges against the defendants*. These are men’s infractions of the law.

The Book of Life

There is also another book in this divine courtroom. [Rev. 20:12](#) says, “*and another book was opened, which is the book of life.*” Of this book, we are told in verse 15,

¹⁵ And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

The book of life, then, contains the names of those who will *not* be judged in “*the lake of fire*,” which, as we will show later, is long-term slavery according to biblical justice. The very presence of the book of life shows that some of those summoned will indeed be found written in this book and will escape the lake of fire. In other words, many believers will stand in this judgment, where their names will be found in the book of life, as Jesus claimed in [John 5:28, 29](#).

²⁸ Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, ²⁹ and shall come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.

This book of life was mentioned long ago in [Exodus 32:31–33](#) when Moses interceded for Israel after they had worshiped the golden calf. He asked to be removed from the book instead of the Israelites.

³¹ Then Moses returned to the Lord, and said, “Alas, this people has committed a great sin, and they have made a god of gold for themselves. ³² But now, if Thou wilt, forgive their sin—and if not, please blot me out from Thy book which Thou hast written!” ³³ And the Lord said to Moses, “Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book.”

No doubt this is the same book that John calls “*the book of life.*” It is a book of names, not of deeds, and the names are compiled by God Himself. God even calls it “*My book.*” Names are recorded and blotted out according to His will. But He refused to blot out Moses’ name from the book, for He is a just God and holds each person accountable for his own deeds.

What many fail to realize is that Israel was “*the church in the wilderness*” ([Acts 7:38, KJV](#)), and that even though all of them had been justified by faith in the blood of the Passover lamb, yet (presumably) they were blotted out of God’s book when they worshiped the golden calf. By extension, the New Testament believers might also be blotted out of God’s book—even after they have been justified by the blood of the true Lamb of God.

Of course, Scripture says nowhere that this is a *permanent* condition. If names may be blotted out, they may also be written and rewritten into the book. No doubt repentance carries much weight in this matter. Perhaps the more important element is in God’s statement: “*Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book.*” This implies that sin (such as idolatry) can potentially result in one’s name being blotted out of the book.

Names Blotted from the Book of Life

The problem is that “*all have sinned*” ([Rom. 3:23](#)) and that even believers continue to “*fall short of the glory of God*.” How many believers have cast down everything that has exalted itself against God? How many have brought every thought into captivity ([2 Cor. 10:5](#))? Are their names written in the book of life, only to be erased each day until they repent of each sin?

Many have been taught this throughout the centuries, particularly in the Roman church. The result is that such believers can never truly know that they are saved, because their salvation constantly hangs on a thread. If they die with some unconfessed sin in their life, they are consigned to the fires of hell or purgatory.

Yet John himself tells us in [1 John 5:13](#),

¹³ These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may know that you have eternal life [i.e., *aionian* life].

How could anyone truly know with confidence that they have attained *aionian* life? Such confidence would be impossible, for believers would never truly know if they had confessed *every* sin. It is only possible to confess those sins that we remember, or those actions and thoughts that we believe to be sinful. Yet until we learn the law, our culture is our standard, and so we often sin without realizing it.

The answer to all of this uncertainty is found mainly in Romans 4, which is where Paul expounds on imputed righteousness. To those who have faith in Christ, God imputes or reckons (*logizomai*) the righteousness of Christ. The result is that God calls what is not as though it were ([Rom. 4:17, KJV](#)). Even as God imputed many nations to Abraham while he had no children at all, so also does God impute righteousness to us while we have none in ourselves.

In other words, if our faith is truly in Christ, rather than in men, or in the church, or in any other idol, God imputes righteousness to us so that we can be assured that we have *aionian* life here and now. This righteousness is continuous, and God needs no eraser or ink blotter to update our record in His book of life.

But if our faith is misplaced, then we are treated accordingly in the divine court. When men obey men rather than God, or when men’s faith rests in their own promise to God, or when their faith depends upon their church covering or upon their status as members of the earthly organization which they consider to be “the church,” they are then judged as if their faith is in men. Every time they sin, their names are blotted out of the book of life—if, indeed, their names were ever written in that book. (Only God can judge.)

The Faith and Works of an Overcomer

This faith issue lies at the heart of what it means to be an overcomer who is qualified to reign with Christ over others. An overcomer, among other things, has faith in Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. His faith is imputed to him as righteousness. His faith is based on the New Covenant, not upon the Old Covenant. In other words, his faith is in the promise of God to men, not in the promises of men to God, as Paul says of Abraham in [Rom. 4:21, 22](#),

²¹ and being fully assured that what He had promised, He was able also to perform. ²² Therefore also it was reckoned [imputed] to him as righteousness.

Just as Abraham’s faith gave him assurance that God was able to fulfill His promise, so also does our faith in Christ give us the same confidence, for [Rom. 4:23, 24](#) says,

²³ Now not for his sake only was it written, that it was reckoned [imputed] to him, ²⁴ but for our sake also, to whom it will be reckoned [imputed], as those who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead.

Those who truly have faith in Jesus Christ are led by the Spirit—that is, they are obedient to God and His law. (Whatever God commands, written or verbalized, is a law.) But learning obedience is a Pentecostal process. No one is perfectly obedient until the law is fully written on his heart, at which time his obedience is replaced by agreement through the feast of Tabernacles.

Yet even while we learn obedience, we enjoy imputed righteousness, so that we do not need to question our salvation while we are yet imperfect. Our faith is not in ourselves, our good intentions, or in our ability to keep our own vows to God, but in God's intent and ability to perfect us by the Holy Spirit's work within our hearts over a period of time. Justifying faith has confidence in God's ability to fulfill His promises, oaths, and covenants.

To put it another way, the first work of Christ, pictured in the first goat in Leviticus 16, atones or *covers* our sin. The second goat *removes* our sin, and this is fulfilled in Christ's second coming. Having our sins covered is the essential feature of imputed righteousness, which we receive through Passover. The removal of sin "*to a solitary land*" ([Lev. 16:22](#)), that is, away from people, replaces *imputed* righteousness with *infused* righteousness.

The overcomers go through the same process of purification and refinement that is common to all believers. They have genuine faith in Christ, rather than in themselves, as Paul says, but they also submit to the Holy Spirit in order to learn obedience. Obedience is the outworking of their faith, as James tells us. Most Christians are caught somewhere between faith and obedience. Only God Himself is truly capable of discerning and judging the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Nonetheless, it is clear that the first resurrection is for overcomers, not for believers in general. The general resurrection includes believers whose names are written in the book of life, as well as unbelievers whose names are not found in that book. Divine rewards and judgments are meted out according to men's works or deeds, as the law prescribes.

The Book of Remembrance

[Malachi 3:16](#), [17](#) says,

¹⁶ Then those who feared the Lord spoke to one another, and the Lord gave attention and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the Lord and who esteem His name.

¹⁷ "And they will be Mine," says the Lord of hosts, "on the day that I prepare My own possession, and I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him."

What is this book and how does it differ from the book of life? The book of life is based upon Passover and Tabernacles, because it focuses upon imputed righteousness (Passover) and infused righteousness (Tabernacles). The book of remembrance appears to focus primarily upon Pentecost, because it is associated with those who are "*My own possession*," a term used also in [Exodus 19:5](#) when Israel stood at the foot of the mount. The KJV renders it "*peculiar treasure*" in [Exodus 19:5](#) and "*My jewels*" in [Mal. 3:17](#). In both cases, the Hebrew word *segullah* is used.

This was a promise of God as a reward for obedience. This promise occurred at Sinai, where God came down as fire and spoke the Ten Commandments. It was the day thereafter observed and revered as *Shavuot*, or Pentecost. It appears, then, that the book of remembrance has to do with the obedient ones and not merely those who are justified by faith. True Pentecostals are those who "hear and obey" (*shema*) when God asks them to ascend the mount into the fire of God. The Israelites were afraid of Pentecost and refused in [Exodus 20:21](#), but the 120 disciples in the book of Acts ascended to the upper room to meet with God and to receive the baptism of fire.

God's peculiar treasure—that God claims as His own possession—are those who go beyond simple Passover faith. They are those who are unafraid of the baptism of fire. They hear His voice and obey, and the Holy Spirit then begins to write the law in their hearts, teaching them obedience until they come fully into agreement with the nature and character of Christ.

Remembrance is a legal word in the Hebrew perspective. When men repent, God *remembers* His covenant. It is not that God has trouble remembering anything. He has no disabilities. Rather, it indicates that the covenant is brought up and lawfully claimed in the court of law. So [Lev. 26:40–42](#) says, “*If they confess their iniquity... then I will remember My covenant... and I will remember the land.*”

The requirement for such remembrance is confession of iniquity. The book of remembrance, then, contains the names of those who admit their iniquity and submit to the baptism of fire, so that all chaff may be consumed by the all-consuming fire of God’s presence. Hence, we ought not to follow Israel’s example of refusing to hear His voice, for they shrank from His fire. They rejected the fire of Pentecost, thereby causing God to (legally) forget His New Covenant vows to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Israel remained under the Old Covenant for another 1,480 years.

Because so many believers have been fearful of entering the fire of God as true Pentecostals, they will have to experience some level of fire at the Great White Throne before they are given the reward of immortality. As Paul says in [1 Cor. 3:15](#), they will be “*saved yet so as through fire.*” It is better to go through the divine fire now, rather than wait until later.

This brings us to a study of the lake of fire.

Chapter 12: The Lake of Fire

[Revelation 20:13](#) says,

¹³ And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds.

Rabbinic opinions varied widely in John's day. The Jewish Encyclopedia tells us in its article on "Resurrection,"

"According to R. Simai (Sifre, Deut. 306) and R. Hiyya bar Abba (Gen. R. xiii. 4; comp. Lev. R. xiii. 3), resurrection awaits only the Israelites; according to R. Abbahu, only the just (Ta'an, 7a); some mention especially the martyrs (Yalk. H. 431, after Tanhuma). R. Abbahu and R. Eleazar confine resurrection to those that die in the Holy Land; others extend it to such as die outside of Palestine (Ket. 111a)."

As we see from this, some "confine resurrection to those that die in the Holy Land." The view was based on certain Scriptures that spoke of inheriting the land. The same article in The Jewish Encyclopedia continues

"The resurrection, therefore, was believed to take place solely in the Holy Land Jerusalem alone is the city of which the dead shall blossom forth like grass (Ket. 111b, after Ps. lxxii. 16). Those that are buried elsewhere will therefore be compelled to creep through cavities in the earth until they reach the Holy Land..."

Again, it says,

"The chief difficulty... is to find out what the resurrection belief actually implied or comprised, since the ancient rabbis themselves differed as to whether resurrection was to be universal, or a privilege of the Jewish people only, or of the righteous only."

Apparently, John was familiar with these differing beliefs, so he assures us that this resurrection is universal and includes even those who had been lost at sea. No one is to be forgotten or left in perpetual death. All will be raised for judgment, and all will be restored.

The Second Death

[Revelation 20:14](#), [15](#) continues,

¹⁴ And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. ¹⁵ And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

A "second death" implies either more than one death (made possible by resurrection from the *first* death) or two *kinds* of death. A common view is that both deaths are of the same type. However, the New Testament in particular actually speaks of two distinct kinds of death. The first is the kind of death that is the result of the mortality that came through Adam's sin. The second is the death of "the flesh," which Paul experienced when he said in [1 Cor. 15:31](#), "*I die daily.*"

Paul often speaks of putting the flesh to death, or crucifying the "old man." This type of death results in renewed life, not in actual death. It is primarily accomplished by putting down the will of the flesh in order to follow the will of the Spirit. But denying the flesh (or the will of the old man) must be done moment by moment, because it does not fully die until mortality claims its prey. For this reason, *the second death is a way of life, not the condition of a corpse.*

Paul tells us further in [Rom. 6:6](#), [7](#) (The Emphatic Diaglott),

⁶ Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, so that the body of sin may be rendered powerless; that we may no longer be enslaved to sin; ⁷ for he who died has been justified from sin.

Justification is accomplished only through death. Hence, all who are justified have died the second death even before they have died as a result of being mortal. The second death, then, is the ultimate antidote to the first. Either we die while we yet live in this mortal body, or we must die after the resurrection. One way or another, all will die the second death, because all will be justified at some point in history. So Paul says in [Rom. 5:18](#),

¹⁸ So then as through one [Adam] transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through [Christ's] one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men.

Since no man can be justified apart from the second death—that is, the death of the old man—it follows that all men will put the old man to death in order to result in “*justification of life to all men.*” This second death is called “*the lake of fire.*”

The Origin of the Lake of Fire

John says nothing of the origin of this “lake.” To understand its origin, one must go back to [Dan. 7:9, 10](#) where the prophet saw the last judgment in terms of “*the Ancient of Days*” seated on the throne. We read,

⁹ ... His throne was ablaze with flames, its wheels were a burning fire. ¹⁰ A river of fire was flowing and coming out from before Him ...

The “river” of fire flowed from the throne of the Ancient of Days to form the “lake” that John saw. The river formed the lake, but the river originated in the fiery throne. Thrones represent authority, which is the right to command and to administer laws. Hence, when a monarch sits on a throne, he rules by law. The fire flowing out from His throne, then, pictures the administration of law and judgment upon all who are being raised from the dead.

Moses was actually the first to catch a glimpse of the fiery throne and the final judgment, telling us in [Deut. 33:2-4 \(KJV\)](#),

² And he said, “The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; He shined forth from mount Paran, and He came with ten thousands of saints; from His right hand went a fiery law for them. ³ Yea, He loved the people; all His saints are in Thy hand; and they sat down at Thy feet; every one shall receive of Thy words. ⁴ Moses commanded us a law, even the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob.”

The “*fiery law*” came from “*His right hand*,” and at the same time “*all His saints are in Thy hand.*” Fire is the only way in which God is portrayed to us ([Deut. 4:12](#)), for it represents His nature as expressed in His law. But Moses also saw the saints in the hand of God. This shows us that the saints too have the same nature as God Himself, as the law is written on their hearts. This nature of God is “*the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob.*”

The fact that these saints are in the hand of God also suggests that they are the *administrators of the fiery law*. The judgment of God does not take place apart from the saints. Rather, the saints are part of “*the river of fire*” as well as “*the lake of fire*,” that is, the process of judgment and the long-term result.

True Justice

It is clear to all that the fire is the judgment of God. However, many have missed the fact that the specific judgments are decreed in accordance with God’s law. All things are held to the standard of the divine nature. Anything less than that must be judged in order to be corrected and reconciled. Nowhere does the law command or even permit eternal torment as a judgment for any sin. Just judgment always is directly proportionate to the crime. No man can commit so much sin in a single life time to warrant unlimited judgment.

It is often said that God must judge all sin in order to be just and holy. That is certainly true, but it is equally true that *God must judge righteously* in order to remain just and holy. If the judgment is too little, it is unjust. If it is too much, it is unjust. The amount of judgment must precisely fit the crime. Hence, if a man steals \$1,000, he must repay his

victim \$2,000, or double restitution ([Exodus 22:4](#)). To sentence such a man to repay \$999 or \$2,001 falls short of the glory and nature of God Himself.

Furthermore, the divine law itself places limits on judgment. For misdemeanors, the law limits beatings, telling us in [Deut. 25:3](#), “*he may beat him forty times, but no more.*” Even if more than forty stripes seem to be warranted, grace forbids the forty-first stripe. For felonies, the law limits enslavement to a maximum of 49 years or whenever the year of Jubilee arrives ([Lev. 25:10](#)). Even if more debt is owed, God extends grace to the debtor.

These are examples of God’s grace built into the law. Grace does not contradict or put away the law, but puts limitations on the amount of judgment that can be meted out. Such is the judgment of a loving God. It shows that the ultimate purpose of the law is to correct and to restore sinners, not to destroy them or to punish them forever.

God’s fiery law shows us, then, that true justice is not done until full restitution has been paid to all the victims of injustice. It is not about punishment; it is about justice. Throughout history, men have sinned against their neighbors, and many of those sins were never judged. Many sinners got away with their crimes, especially those who were rich enough or powerful enough to remain immune to prosecution. Hence, many of history’s victims never saw justice in their lifetime.

The purpose of the Great White Throne judgment is to recall all of the dead and to administer true justice for every unresolved crime (sin) ever perpetrated throughout history. Only when all sin has been judged according to the law can it be said that justice has been done.

The Death Penalty

This simple principle of God’s law shows us that although the death penalty is one of the divine judgments, it can never bring justice to all on the scale that is required by the nature of God. Those who believe that the lake of fire annihilates the unbelievers do not understand the law or the requirement of justice. If a thief is killed, how is his victim recompensed for his loss? No, the thief must be required to pay restitution, and once this is accomplished, the law forgives his sin and has no further interest in his case. The books are closed. Forgiveness is mandatory. Justice is done, and to put the ex-sinner to death is excessive and unjust punishment, violating the nature of God.

The death penalty was instituted when God judged Adam by imposing mortality upon him and his descendants. This was actually a merciful act, for it delayed his actual death, giving him time not only to repent, but also to experience the second death while he yet lived. We all benefit in the same way, except for those who die young.

Later, when God gave legislation through Moses, some sins were beyond the ability of the earthly courts to judge properly. Premeditated murder, for example, had no solution, because men could not restore their victims by raising them from the dead. If a man stole another man (kidnapping), how could he restore two men as required by law? Raping an engaged or married woman could not be undone in a court of law, for the decrees of earthly judges could never un-rape a woman. These all required the death penalty, unless the sinner was forgiven by the victim according to the Law of Victims Rights.

In such cases, the death penalty was not designed to punish, but to appeal the case to the higher court, where it would be heard at the Great White Throne at the end of the age. Only that court is capable of administering justice in these “hard” cases. In fact, these cases are not so difficult that God must put sinners to death permanently.

The death penalty does not resolve the problem of injustice. It is never the end of the story. It is not the final solution to the problem of sin, nor is it permanent. The final goal of history is for God to reclaim all that was His by right of creation, to reconcile all that He has created ([Col. 1:16–20](#)), and to put all things under the feet of Christ, so that He may be “*all in all*” ([1 Cor. 15:28](#)).

The second death is a time of correction, where men either pay their victims or are sold into slavery to work off their debt until the Jubilee. At the Jubilee, all sinners return to their lost inheritance, and Christ Himself receives the full inheritance that was always His from the beginning.

Therefore, the lake of fire, which describes the second death, is the judgment of God with the goal of restoring the lawful order in accordance with the judgments of the law. We are admonished to “*die daily*,” but if we do not do so in this life time, we will do so in the age following the Great White Throne judgment.

That is the nature of the “fire” in the lake of fire.

Chapter 13: Biblical Slavery and the Lake of Fire

Even as the “*river of fire*” in [Dan. 7:10](#) is the lawful decree or verdict upon sinners being judged by the fiery law ([Deut. 33:2, KJV](#)), so also the lake of fire is the administration of these verdicts. Such “fire” was never meant to be taken literally. The law itself is the fire, because it is the expression of the divine nature, seen in the days of Moses when God came down as fire upon the mount to give Israel the Ten Commandments and the rest of the law.

True justice is defined by the law of God. He does not judge mankind by the laws of others, but by His own law. There is no such thing as eternal torment in the divine law, for all sin is judged righteously, and all verdicts are in strict proportion to the seriousness of each crime (sin).

Stealing a sheep or a car requires the thief to restore two sheep or two cars to his victim ([Exodus 22:4](#)). If the stolen item cannot be returned for any reason, the thief must pay fourfold restitution ([Exodus 22:1](#)). Stealing the tools of a man’s trade (an ox or tractor) requires five-fold restitution ([Exodus 22:1](#)).

Those sins that are beyond restitution, such as premeditated murder or kidnapping must be appealed to the divine court, and the death penalty is imposed until the case can be heard at the Great White Throne at the end of the age. The pattern for this is found in [Deut. 1:16, 17](#), in Moses’ instructions to the judges in Israel:

¹⁶ Then I charged your judges at that time, saying, “Hear the cases between your fellow countrymen, and judge righteously between a man and his fellow countryman, or the alien who is with him. ¹⁷ You shall not show partiality in judgment; you shall hear the small and the great alike. You shall not fear man, for the judgment is God’s. And the case that is too hard for you, you shall bring it to me, and I will hear it.”

Moses was a type of Christ, for Moses himself testified that God told him that He would raise up a prophet “*like you*” ([Deut. 18:18](#)). Hence, Moses acted as the Supreme Court Justice in Israel, while Jesus Christ is the Supreme Court Justice for the world.

The Biblical Concept of Debt

All sin is reckoned as a debt. If a man steals or damages property, he *owes* his victim restitution. Debt puts men “*under the law*,” that is, the law has a claim upon the sinner until the debt is paid or until the expiration of the date when the Jubilee trumpet sounds. The reason believers are no longer “*under the law*” ([Rom. 6:15](#)) is not because the law was abolished, but because our debt was paid by the blood of Jesus Christ. Hence, the law has no further claim upon us in its work to restore the rights of men to receive justice.

Adam’s sin created a debt that he could not pay, pictured as 10,000 talents in [Matt. 18:24, 25](#).

²⁵ But since he did not have the means to repay, his lord commanded him to be sold, along with his wife and children and all that he had, and repayment to be made.

If a sinner does not have enough property to pay the debt, his entire estate must be sold (to a redeemer) and he and his family are to be sold into slavery. This is biblical justice as Jesus set forth in His parable. It is what happened to Adam at the beginning, and it is also what has happened to all sinners thereafter. So Paul tells us in [Rom. 7:14](#), “*I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin.*” In fact, the whole world has been sold into bondage, for it was all part of Adam’s estate.

Two Death Penalties

The first death (mortality) is the bondage under which the entire creation suffers on account of Adam’s sin, for [Rom. 8:20–23](#) says,

²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²² For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.

Such is the result of Adam's sin, which, by divine decree, resulted in the sale of his entire estate. Paul says in [Rom. 5:12](#) (properly translated), "*thus death passed through into all mankind, on which all sinned*" (Concordant Version). In other words, because we are mortal, we sin. Mortality is our disease (biblical leprosy), our inherent weakness in our flesh, and the reason we fall short of the glory of God. We are then judged secondarily for our own sins, and hence, Paul says in [Rom. 6:23](#), "*the wages of [our own] sin is death.*"

The death penalty for our own sin is not the first death, but the second. The first death is the penalty imposed upon all of creation because of Adam's sin. The second death is the penalty for our own individual sins, which we incur on account of the weakness of mortal flesh.

The Law of Redemption

God's solution to both kinds of death is the law of redemption and the law of Jubilee, both of which are *grace laws*. When a man is sold into bondage for a debt he cannot pay, the one who purchases him is a slave master. When Paul says that he was "*sold into bondage to sin*," he was personifying Sin, telling us that Sin had enslaved his flesh—that is, his "old man"—and that Sin commands his slaves to be disobedient to the law of God.

But as a believer, Paul was no longer the old man, but a new creation. Romans 7 pictures Paul as an unwilling slave, forced by his fleshly master to sin, but desiring inwardly to serve the law of God ([Rom. 7:22, 25](#)). Thus, he identifies with the inner man as his true self, refusing to identify his true self as being descended from Adam (the old man), but instead claiming a heavenly Father who has begotten him by the Spirit ([Rom. 7:17](#)).

The new creation man is not subject to the authority and law of sin. When sin issues a command to break the law of God, the new creation man does not respond, because sin is not his father. He honors the fifth commandment by obeying his heavenly Father, while the old man does so by honoring his earthly father, Adam—the man of sin.

This is part of the law of redemption by which we may change masters. [Lev. 25:47–49](#) tells us that if a stranger or foreigner buys a slave that is being sold at the command of the court, the slave's kinsman has the right of redemption. The stated purpose of such redemptions is to put the slave under a master who loves him. So important is this to our God of Love that He even strips the foreign slave master of his right to retain the slave if a near kinsman has the means to purchase him.

By this law, Jesus came as our Kinsman Redeemer to redeem those enslaved to sin. He did not come as a stranger, nor did He take upon Himself the nature of angels, but took upon Himself flesh and blood, so that He might be our Kinsman. [Heb. 2:11](#) says "*He is not ashamed to call them brethren*," and [Heb. 2:17](#) says, "*He had to be made like His brethren in all things.*" As a near kinsman, Jesus obtained the lawful right of redemption, so that His desire to purchase slaves could not be rebuffed by the original slave master (sin).

Those who place their faith in Christ are the redeemed ones. These become slaves of Jesus Christ who has purchased them, as the law says in [Lev. 25:53](#),

⁵³ Like a man hired year by year he shall be with him; he shall not rule over him with severity in your sight.

In other words, the law commands the near kinsman to treat his redeemed slaves as hired employees, not as slaves. Biblical slavery is not the same as man's slave systems. Love rules, even though the slave is still a slave and does not have the right to follow the law of sin that his former master had required of him in the past.

The Law of Jubilee

Redemption is not the full answer to sin's slavery, for a redeemed slave is still required to be obedient. The full answer comes only when there is agreement, for that alone is true freedom. [Lev. 25:54](#), [55](#) says,

⁵⁴ Even if he is not redeemed by these means, he shall still go out in the year of Jubilee, he and his sons with him. ⁵⁵ For the sons of Israel are My servants; they are My servants whom I brought out from the land of Egypt. I am the Lord your God.

Even if a man has been enslaved to sin for his entire life, and no kinsman redeemer has purchased him during that time, he must still be set free in the year of Jubilee when all debts are cancelled and every man returns to his lost inheritance. The stated reason is that "*the sons of Israel are My servants.*" In [Deut. 7:8](#) Moses says to Israel, "*the Lord loved you and ... redeemed you from the house of slavery from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.*" He acted as the Kinsman-Redeemer who loved Israel and purchased her as His own slave (or servant).

Therefore, all slavery on earth is subordinate to the greater slavery by God Himself. Men may have authority to enslave others on earth, but their authority is subject to that of the heavenly Slave Master who exercises sovereignty over all human slave masters. Hence, when Paul personifies Sin as an earthly slave master, it is clear that Sin has authority, but not sovereignty. For this reason, Sin must sell his slaves when the Kinsman-Redeemer demands it. Likewise, when the year of Jubilee arrives, Sin has no authority to retain his slaves but must submit to the law of Jubilee and set them all free.

The Lake of Fire Application

The Great White Throne is the place where God's law is used to judge all of humanity. The law does not demand torture in a literal fire. It demands payment of debt. Believers will be "*saved, yet so as through fire*," because in the end, even though their works are judged, they have been purchased by their Kinsman-Redeemer.

The unbelievers, however, are those who failed to claim Jesus Christ as their Redeemer, and so the decree from the throne is that they must pay for the own sin. But they owe more than they are able to pay. Therefore, they must be sold in payment of their debt. The problem, of course, is that even if they are perfect from that moment on, their good works cannot pay down their previous debt. Good works only ensure that the debt does not *increase*. Good works are expected as part of normal life.

Sinners, then, are sentenced to biblical slavery to the overcomers, who are able to redeem them, because they are the body of Christ. This is how the overcomers "*reign with Christ.*" Their authority is derived from the Dominion Mandate that was first given to Adam in [Gen. 1:26](#). Because the overcomers share in Christ's inheritance, they have the means by which to purchase those slaves. And because they have the loving nature of Christ, they will not rule with severity over their slaves ([Lev. 25:53](#)), but treat them as nephews and cousins employed in the family business.

In fact, they are employees in training, learning righteousness during their time of judgment, as [Isaiah 26:9](#) tells us, "*when the earth experiences Thy judgments, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness.*" The overcomers will be given authority over their slaves, but they will also be given the responsibility to train their slaves in the ways of God until the Creation Jubilee sets all of creation "*free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God*" ([Rom. 8:21](#)).

The law of Jubilee invokes this freedom by grace alone. Even though the debt is unpayable, there is a limit on liability for debt. Though God does not immediately release debtors, neither does He require perpetual slavery on account of debt (sin). Divine judgment is designed to train sinners in the ways of God and to bring them to spiritual maturity before releasing them in the greatest Jubilee of creation history.

Is not this consistent with the nature of our God of Love? Is not this consistent also with His justice? Is not this the awesome God that we can truly worship from the bottom of our hearts?

Chapter 14: All Things Become New

The book of Revelation is the prophetic history of the first Creation “Week” of 7,000 years, ending with the Great White Throne judgment. Very little is said about conditions after this, and the book is really incomplete in that sense. It ends with only overcomers and believers being reconciled to God, with the rest of creation yet in process through the lake of fire.

By understanding the nature of the lake of fire, we can see that the Restoration of All Things is implied, but it does not state this explicitly. In studying biblical slavery, however, we see that the will and plan of God is for divine judgment to be administered in love, and not merely in power. This is seen clearly in the law of redemption, where God’s desire and will is for slaves to be ruled by their kinsmen, rather than by strangers.

Likewise, it is a violation of the law to mistreat a slave. If a slave master knocked out the tooth or an eye of the slave, the slave was to be set free ([Exodus 21:26, 27](#)). Though the law was there to uphold a slave master’s right to be obeyed, it was also there to uphold the slave’s rights. Slavery among the nations usually gave men the right of life and death over their slaves, but God’s law makes it clear that we are all *God’s slaves*, redeemed from slavery to “Egypt” or “Babylon.” Even slave masters are subject to a higher Power. All must exercise their authority as stewards, not as owners.

At the Great White Throne, every knee will bow. This marks a great change in earth’s history, because for the first time since Adam sinned, all men will lose their right to sin and will be held accountable to the Body of Christ on earth if they violate the law of God. If they sin, judgment will be swift. No longer will powerful men get away with unjustly mistreating others for their entire careers.

Yet we must understand that at this point in history, all men will finally understand the truth. All will know and agree that Christ has the divine right to rule and to be obeyed. They will swear allegiance to Him, and they will all be converted by that point in time. Hence, in the lake of fire they will serve their time as bond slaves of Jesus Christ, which is not bad at all, even if their flesh yet desires to sin.

The Last Enemy

In the end, it is the Apostle Paul who reveals the most about the end of earth’s history when the last enemy itself is abolished. He says in [1 Cor. 15:26](#), “*the last enemy that will be abolished is death.*” Physical death—that is, the first death, or mortality—will be abolished at the resurrection when the rest of the dead are summoned to the Great White Throne. John says in [Rev. 20:14](#), “*death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire.*”

In other words, no one will be dead anymore, and Hades (“hell”) itself will no longer hold anyone. The fact that Hades is cast into the lake of fire shows that Hades too is subject to the limitations of the fiery law. The law in [Lev. 19:32](#) is just one of those laws, which demand that all men “*rise up before the grayheaded,*” that is, before the Ancient of Days. Hades is subject to that law and cannot keep any man from rising when the Ancient of Days appears.

The first death will be replaced by the second death, which is the lake of fire itself. Many think that this second death is the same as the first—either a torture pit or a place of annihilation. Both views, however, treat Hades as if it still exists beyond the general resurrection. One group says that all sinners will be tortured in “hell” for eternity, while the other says that all sinners will be annihilated in the grave (their concept of “hell”) for eternity. Neither view is lawful, and both attempt to retain Hades beyond the point where it is abolished.

Hades is abolished at the general resurrection, along with the first death (mortality). But since death (not Hades) is “*the last enemy,*” then it can only be that the second death is the last enemy to be abolished. So at the end of time, when all have learned righteousness through the long age of divine judgment, all debt will be canceled, the accounts will be closed, and God will be all in all. Then and only then can it be said that death—the second death—is truly abolished.

A New City for a New Earth

John says in [Revelation 21:1, 2](#),

¹ And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.

John speaks from the perspective of earth's history. When Paul spoke of this, he brought it down to the personal level in [2 Cor. 5:17](#),

¹⁷ Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

When everyone is truly “a new creature,” then John's broader vision of the future is fulfilled. Just as our heaven and our earth is renewed through Christ on an individual level (as our old man is put to death and we walk out the life of the New Creation Man), so also does John present this as a universal promise.

John then links this to the marriage theme on its highest level—the marriage of heaven and earth. This fulfills Jesus' prayer in [Matt. 6:10](#),

¹⁰ Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

In other words, when heaven and earth come into agreement, then they have a perfect marriage. During the final ages of judgment, where the sinners remain in the lake of fire, there is still a need for authority, because there is still potential resistance to the will of God. Sinners are still learning obedience during that time, so that Age remains in an Old Covenant marriage which demands obedience.

Afterward, when all are in agreement with Christ at the Creation Jubilee, the basis of this great marriage between heaven and earth shifts to the New Covenant pattern, where no one has to command others. All will instinctively know what to do, and no “law enforcement” will be necessary to ensure compliance.

In that sense, the law too will pass away—not that it will be abolished in the absolute sense, but that it will no longer be external. When the law is fully written on our hearts, all will do the will of God by nature, rather than by obedience. Of this time, Jesus said in [Matt. 5:18](#),

¹⁸ For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished.

So what happens when heaven and earth pass away? What happens when these are replaced by the new heavens and the new earth? It follows that at that time the Law passes away as well, at least in some manner. Obviously, this does not mean that chaos and disagreement suddenly are re-established. No, it is to be understood as the ultimate fulfillment of the promise of God in the New Covenant, where [Heb. 8:11](#) says,

¹¹ And they shall not teach everyone his fellow citizen, and everyone his brother, saying, “Know the Lord,” for all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest of them.

This shows that full knowledge of God will be in everyone, and it also implies that no one will have to *command* anyone to know Him or His will. Commands are a function of the Old Covenant, and when the New Covenant is universally implemented, no commands are necessary in the sense that we understand them today.

It is difficult to conceive of such a time, for we have only seen short glimpses of such things from time to time as we are led by the Spirit. This goal is a long way down the corridor of history. For this reason, the law has not yet been

abolished. As long as there is disagreement in the earth, the law of God will be needed to set the unchanging standard and to make sin sinful.

Isaiah's Prophecy

Speaking of the goal of history, [Isaiah 65:17–19](#) says,

¹⁷ For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind. ¹⁸ But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem for rejoicing, and her people for gladness.

When the prophet saw “*new heavens and a new earth*,” it is plain that this was in contrast to the first heavens and the first earth. Or perhaps we should call it the old heavens and the old earth. In the same passage Isaiah also speaks of “Jerusalem” being created. John interprets this to mean “*new Jerusalem*” ([Rev. 21:2](#)). It is not the old city, which is the earthly city, because “*the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind*,” Isaiah tells us. The earthly Jerusalem is one of those “former things,” which are contrasted with the “new” things being created.

The entire 21st chapter of Revelation is a description of the new heavens, the new earth, and the new Jerusalem. As we will see, John quotes Isaiah many times. In each quotation, he interprets Isaiah’s “Jerusalem” as a reference to the “new Jerusalem.” This tells us that just because the Old Testament prophets use the term “Jerusalem,” it does not necessarily mean that they were referring to the earthly city.

Jerusalem is *Yerushalayim* in Hebrew. It literally means “two Jerusalems.” The Hebrew language has singular, plural, and dual words. If the city had been called *Yerushalem*, it would have been a single city. If it were *Yerushalim*, it would mean more than one city. But it is *Yerushalayim*, where the *ayim* ending makes it mean *precisely two cities*. The ancient rabbis debated the meaning of this, but the revelation was largely hidden from them. It is only when we come to the New Testament that the meaning becomes clear—at least among Christians who believe the writings of Paul and John.

The bottom line is that the Old Testament prophets speak of Jerusalem without distinguishing between the earthly city and the heavenly city. So it is left to us to discern by the Spirit which city will actually fulfill each prophecy.

There are many apparent contradictions in the writings of the prophets regarding “Jerusalem.” Some portray the city as a blessing to the earth, having a glorious future; others portray the city as a curse to the nations, ultimately to be destroyed without hope. Both sets of prophecies cannot apply to the same city, but if we see that there are two cities by the same name, then Scripture is not contradictory.

Shin, the Devouring Fire of God

The 21st chapter of Revelation correlates with the 21st letter of the Hebrew alphabet. It is the *shin*, which literally means “teeth” and carries the idea of consuming or devouring. In this case, the new consumes the old, even as fire consumes that which can be burned.

The Hebrew word for “fire” is *esh* [??], spelled *alef* and *shin*. *Alef* is literally a bull, and it means “strong, first, primary.” The *shin* means “teeth,” and means “to consume or devour.” Hence, “fire” is “the strong devourer.” When God came as a fire upon Mount Sinai, it was said in [Deut. 4:24](#), “*The Lord your God is a consuming fire.*”

The action of the consuming fire gives us the background for the time when the new heavens, the new earth, and the new Jerusalem essentially consume or devour all that is old. This is the purpose of the lake of fire, which affects both heaven and earth.

[Revelation 21:3](#) says,

³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is among [*meta*, “among, amid, in the midst of, with, by”] men, and He shall dwell among [*meta*] them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among [*meta*] them.

This statement comes in the context of the marriage theme in the previous verse, connected by the word “and” at the start of verse 3. For this reason, the statement saying “*God Himself shall be among them*” is to be taken in the sense of a divine marriage. Furthermore, the voice from the throne tells us that “*the tabernacle of God is among men*.” We must understand this from a Hebrew perspective, where a tabernacle is a *sukkah* (and a *chuppah*), not only a place of worship, but also a marriage canopy.

This also forms the background of the feast of Tabernacles, or Sukkoth, which prophesies of the marriage of the Lamb to His bride. So when it depicts a marriage, it is a time of rejoicing and intimacy. So also [Rev. 21:4](#) says,

⁴ and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.

Hence, pain and sorrow are no longer inherent in the new order brought to the new earth by the new Jerusalem. It is a new creation.

The Immanuel Prophecy

In the days of King Ahaz of Judah, the prophet Isaiah took his son, Shear-jashub (“the remnant will return”) to bring a prophetic word to the king. This word was given because the king was afraid of an Assyrian invasion. The northern House of Israel was soon to be taken into captivity, but both Israel and Judah were threatened. Isaiah told Ahaz to “*have no fear and do not be fainthearted*” ([Isaiah 7:4](#)), because their threats “*shall not stand nor shall it come to pass*” ([Isaiah 7:7](#)).

Isaiah then told Ahaz to ask for a sign of deliverance. Ahaz refused, but God intended to impart revelation, not only to him but to future generations. We read in [Isaiah 7:12–14](#),

¹² But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, nor will I test the Lord.” ¹³ Then he said, “Listen now, O house of David! Is it too slight a thing for you to try the patience of men, that you will try the patience of my God as well?

¹⁴ Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign; Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.”

Immanuel means “*God with us*,” and this sign will have its final fulfillment in [Rev. 21:3](#), when all enemies have been subdued and “*God Himself shall be among them*.”

The sign of deliverance given to King Ahaz was the birth of his son, Hezekiah, under whose rule Judah was to be delivered. As a type of Christ, Hezekiah was the “Immanuel” of his day. It was under Hezekiah that the Assyrian army was destroyed after it attempted to conquer Jerusalem ([2 Kings 19:35, 36](#)). Isaiah’s assurance that the Assyrian threat “*shall not stand nor shall it come to pass*” was fulfilled about 40 years later when Hezekiah was 39 years old.

God’s deliverance of Jerusalem from the Assyrian army fulfilled the prophecy of Immanuel, because it showed them that God was indeed with them. It was God’s presence that delivered Jerusalem and the refugees packed within its stone walls.

The greater level of prophetic fulfillment came with the birth of Jesus, the *real* “Immanuel,” whose presence would bring salvation and deliverance in a greater way. Hence, when Mary became pregnant by the Holy Spirit, Isaiah’s deliverance prophecy was applicable.

When Mary became pregnant, Joseph thought he should put her away quietly. But [Matt. 1:20–23](#) says,

²⁰ But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for that which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. ²¹ And she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins.” ²² Now all this took place that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, ²³ “Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which translated means, ‘God with us’.”

It is interesting to note that neither Hezekiah nor Jesus were named Immanuel. Yet they each saved their people—first Jerusalem, and later the world itself. Hezekiah saved his people from Assyria. Jesus saved His people “*from their sins*.” Both the Assyrians and the people’s sins were enemies on different levels. It is only when the last enemy (death) is destroyed that the Immanuel prophecy is fulfilled entirely.

Hezekiah and Hephzibah

As we have already noted, Hezekiah was a type of Christ. By extension, that means Hephzibah ([2 Kings 21:1](#)) was a prophetic type of the bride of Christ. Hephzibah was Hezekiah’s wife and the mother of Manasseh. Isaiah saw Hephzibah in this prophetic role when he prophesied of the New Jerusalem in [Isaiah 62:1–5](#). Verse 1 begins:

¹ For Zion’s sake I will not keep silent, and for [New] Jerusalem’s sake I will not keep quiet, until her righteousness [Zedek] goes forth like brightness, and her salvation [Yeshua] like a torch that is burning.

John applies this passage to the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21. It is also of interest to see the Hebrew name of Jesus (Yeshua) appear in the same verse. Isaiah vowed to not remain silent until Jerusalem became the city shining with the light of righteousness (Zedek). This too is prophetic of Jesus, who came as the high priest of Melchizedek, which was the title given first to Shem, the builder and founder of Jerusalem.

In [Rev. 21:23, 24](#) the light of the city is a major feature of the New Jerusalem. Verse 23 says that “*the glory of God has illumined*” the city, and in verse 24, says, “*the nations shall walk by its light, and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory into it.*”

[Isaiah 62:2](#) continues,

² And the nations will see your righteousness, and all kings your glory; and you will be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord will designate.

It is apparent that the “new name” given to Jerusalem is simply the New Jerusalem, as John calls it in [Rev. 21:2](#).

[Isaiah 62:3](#) continues,

³ You will also be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

When a city was built upon a hill or mountain, its walls resembled a crown on the head of a king. [Isaiah 62:4](#) then speaks of Jerusalem as Hephzibah, saying,

⁴ It will no longer be said to you, “Forsaken” [Azubah], nor to your land will it any longer be said, “Desolate” [Shemamah], but you will be called “My Delight is in her” [Hephzibah], and your land “Married” [Beulah]; for the Lord delights in you, and to Him your land will be married.

This verse specifically mentions Hephzibah in connection to Jerusalem. But John tells us that it is a reference to the New Jerusalem. Hence, Hephzibah is not a restored earthly city, but the heavenly city that comes down from heaven, a city not built with hands, the true city that Abraham was promised, and which he sought ([Heb. 11:16](#)).

As the wife of Hezekiah, king of Judah, Hephzibah was the queen. As a type of the bride of Christ, her name shows that Christ delights in her—that is, He has fallen in love with her, and “*your land will be married.*” Isaiah’s prophecy, then, speaks of the New Jerusalem as being Hephzibah, the wife of the king. This is fulfilled in Revelation 21 when the New Jerusalem is married to Jesus Christ.

[Isaiah 62:5](#) concludes this section, saying,

⁵ For as a young man marries a virgin, so your sons will marry [ba’al] you; and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so your God will rejoice over you.

It seems odd for Isaiah to say that “*your sons will marry you.*” Would this not indicate a form of spiritual incest? First of all, “*as a young man marries a virgin*” speaks of a normal love story. Secondly, Isaiah seems to say that the sons of Jerusalem will marry their mother, Jerusalem. Perhaps this is not the correct translation.

The Hebrew word translated “marry” is *ba’al*, which most people recognize as the main god of the Canaanites. But it is only a title which means “to take dominion over, to rule, to be master of, to possess, to own.” As a title, it means literally an owner (landowner), master, lord.

The word is also used of marriage, because a husband was said to “rule” over his wife (based on [Gen. 3:16](#)). Hence, the word had a broad range of meaning. The Canaanites called their false god *ba’al*, as if he were the rightful ruler (owner) of the land, whereas Yahweh was the true Owner and King by right of creation.

In [Isaiah 62:5](#), the ones who rule Jerusalem are “sons,” that is, the sons of God, the children of “Sarah,” who represents the New Covenant and the New Jerusalem ([Gal. 4:22–26](#)). As the body of Christ with Jesus as their Head, these “sons” are part of the Husband, or Groom, that marries the Bride. But by another metaphor, these sons also rule the New Jerusalem.

The Sons of God

The New Testament concept of the sons of God is unique to Christianity, although perhaps the majority of Christians do not fully understand this truth. In fact, this truth was largely hidden in types and shadows until Jesus Himself was born of a virgin who had been impregnated by the Holy Spirit. This unusual birth made Him the Son of God and the Son of Man at the same time, because He had a heavenly Father and an earthly mother.

This established the pattern for all the sons of God who have been “*begotten [gennao] not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God*” ([John 1:13](#), The Emphatic Diaglott). This occurs when a person believes (has faith in) the word, which is likened to an imperishable “seed” ([1 Peter 1:23](#)). When the Holy Spirit begets a holy seed in us, we are said to be impregnated with “*Christ in you, the hope of glory*” ([Col. 1:27](#)).

Paul tells us that this holy seed is a “*new creature*,” ([2 Cor. 5:17](#)) and a “*new man*” ([Col. 3:10, KJV](#)), distinct from the person that was conceived by our earthly parents. Our “old man” came strictly from Adam, who was the original “old man.” But when we were spiritually begotten, our identity shifted to a new man, which, like Christ, is both a son of God and a son of man. This is because this new man has a heavenly Father and an earthly mother.

Chapter 16: Unifying Heaven and Earth

The feast of Tabernacles is fulfilled when the sons of God (as a body) are united with their Head at the coming of Christ. When the body of overcomers is complete, then the Head comes to the body to create an eligible priest to the nations on earth.

While many individuals throughout the centuries have come into union with Christ, it is only at the end of the age that the greater body itself is complete. Then the resurrection will occur first at the feast of Trumpets, so the dead overcomers can be part of this body on earth. Two weeks later, on the first day of Tabernacles, the living overcomers will be “changed” ([1 Cor. 15:52](#)). The two sets of overcomers will then be able to be a single, perfected body on earth, lacking only the Head to be complete.

I believe that, according to the pattern in [John 7:14](#), Jesus will come in the midst of the feast of Tabernacles. The completed body (the sons of God) will then be caught away and presented to the Father on the eighth day, according to the law in [Exodus 22:29, 30](#),

29 You shall not delay the offering from your harvest and your vintage. The first-born of your sons you shall give to Me. **30 You shall do the same with your oxen and with your sheep. It shall be with its mother seven days; on the eighth day you shall give it to Me.**

Jesus was presented to the Father on the eighth day (wave-sheaf offering). The church was presented to the Father seven weeks later on the eighth day (Pentecost). The sons of God will be presented to the Father on the eighth day of Tabernacles. Once they have been presented to God according to the law, the sons of God will then be “manifested” to the world.

Because each of them will be “*priests of God and of Christ*” ([Rev. 20:6](#)), together they will be (collectively) the New Creation Priest that represents God to the world and the world to God. The prophetic pattern in this case is found in [Lev. 8:35](#), where the priests were consecrated for seven days for priesthood, and then presented to the people on the eighth day ([Lev. 9:1](#)).

For this reason, I believe that the sons of God will be presented to God on the eighth day of Tabernacles and then return to be presented to the people later on the same day (earth time). Of course, since time is not relevant in heaven, they could remain in heaven for as long as necessary and still be presented to the earth on the same day. In fact, from an earthly perspective, it may seem as if these sons of God had never left the earth—or only momentarily—for it is possible that they could return at the same moment that they left.

Unity as a Husband and Wife

This marriage of the Head and Body brings about the full New Creation Man, which then rules over the rest of the creation as a perfected Husband would rule over a yet-imperfect wife. Hence, from that standpoint, the Bride of Christ is also a “Husband” to the world. These spiritual truths are depicted in terms of earthly marriage relationships, but spiritual relationships are not sexual, nor do these relationship beget children in the same manner.

Most people have difficulty thinking in more than one dimension, but that is how Scripture requires us to think. Just think of this as a person who wears more than one “hat.” A man can be a father, a son, a brother, and a husband all at the same time. When we add the spiritual dimension, where, as Paul says, “*there is neither male nor female*” ([Gal. 3:28](#)), we may play both roles, which cannot be applied on a physical plane in the same way.

The purpose of the feast of Tabernacles is to unite heaven and earth in a great marriage. Here is where it is vital to understand the Hebrew (scriptural) view, rather than the Greek view that has crept into Christianity over the years. Recall that the Greek view started with the Demiurge (devil) creating all physical things, which caused them to believe that *matter was inherently evil*. They believed that spirit was good and matter was evil.

Based upon this assumption, the Greeks believed that history would end with a full *separation* of good and evil—that spirit would be separated from matter. Men’s “spiritual souls” would leave the physical body and go to heaven, where they would exist in a spiritual form. The divine plan, they believed, was not a marriage between heaven and earth, but *a great divorce*.

The Hebrew revelation was that God created physical matter and pronounced it “good” at each stage and “very good” at the end ([Gen. 1:31](#)). He then created marriage and said in [Gen. 2:24](#),

²⁴ For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.

This verse also established the manner in which this union was to take place. In most earthly marriages, it is the bride who leaves her house and goes to live with her husband, where she shares in His family inheritance. But in this first marriage command (or prophecy), it was the husband who was to leave his father and mother and come to his wife in order to “*become one flesh*.”

This is the first major prophecy of the coming of Christ out of heaven to the earth to claim His bride. This is the foundational prophecy of “*God with us*.” It is the fact that “*God was in Christ*” ([2 Cor. 5:19](#)) coming to earth to unite heaven and earth in a New Covenant marriage. This was the opposite of Greek religious philosophy from beginning to end.

The feast of Tabernacles, then, is not the time of separation, but of unification. However, at the time of the first resurrection, only a few will be qualified to unify heaven and earth within themselves. For this reason, the sons of God are a separate body of people, and Scripture makes this clear. Nonetheless, their purpose is to minister to the rest of the world, so that the blessings of God may be dispensed to all the families of the earth according to the Abrahamic promise. The ultimate purpose is to unite all of mankind under the rule of Jesus Christ.

Priestly Garments

One of the great keys to understanding the nature and role of the sons of God—that is, the “*priests of God and of Christ*”—is to learn of the two garments that they wear while ministering. They were to minister in regular (wool) clothing in the outer court, but in fine linen garments when they ministered to God in the Sanctuary. This is seen in [Ezekiel 44:17–19](#), speaking of “*the sons of Zadok*,” who were prophetic types of the Melchizedek Order.

¹⁷ And it shall be that when they enter at the gates of the inner court, they shall be clothed with linen garments; and wool shall not be on them while they are ministering in the gates of the inner court and in the house. ¹⁸ ... they shall not gird themselves with anything which makes them sweat. ¹⁹ And when they go out into the outer court, into the outer court to the people, they shall put off their garments in which they have been ministering and lay them in the holy chambers; then they shall put on other garments, that they may not transmit holiness to the people with their garments.

While this prophecy was spoken in Old Covenant terms, it was prophetic of a new order of priests—the Melchizedek Order, of which Jesus is the High Priest. Even as Zadok replaced the line of Phinehas in the days of Solomon, so also has Melchizedek (Melchi-Zadok) replaced the entire Levitical order. Ezekiel’s prophecy referred to the change of priesthood from the line of Phinehas to that of Zadok, but this must be understood in the greater light of New Testament truth.

The two priestly garments were of wool and linen. The linen garments were stored in “*the holy chambers*” alongside the temple, used as dressing rooms. When ministering in the house itself, they put on linen garments. But when ministering to the people in the outer court, they dressed in woolen garments.

These two garments reveal two kinds of body: physical and spiritual, earthly and heavenly. In the big picture, where (as [Rev. 15:6](#) says) there is a temple in heaven, no one dressed in wool (a physical body) may enter that heavenly

temple. Only those dressed in linen minister there. But when those priests return to the earth, that is, the “outer court,” to minister to the people, they must put on woolen garments—that is, physical bodies—to do their ministry.

The divine purpose is to create a generation of New Creation priests who have access to the linen garments, but who may also minister in woolen garments to the people on earth. Such priests must follow the divine rules for each garment, but once they become manifested sons of God, they have access to both realms—heaven and earth. They can minister equally well in both realms.

This was uniquely a Hebrew revelation that stood in direct contrast to the common Greek view. It is unfortunate that the Greek view has crept into Christian religious thought, for it has created inherent contradictions that have confused many people.

When Jesus rose from the dead, He appeared to His disciples occasionally for the next 40 days ([Acts 1:3](#)). He always appeared to them in “woolen” garments. That is, He appeared to them in physical form as the law commanded. When the disciples were fellowshiping in a locked room, He suddenly appeared in their midst. They thought He was a spirit or ghost ([Luke 24:37](#)) and were frightened. But Jesus told them, “*touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have*” ([Luke 24:39](#)).

He then asked for something to eat just prove that He was physical. This was done also for our benefit, so that we might know that He appeared to His disciples in a lawful manner, having put on woolen garments while ministering to them. When He was finished, he changed clothing and disappeared, returning to His Father in the temple in heaven.

The Feast of Tabernacles

Tabernacles was celebrated by dwelling in a booth made of living branches for a week. This signified being clothed with immortality in the spiritual garments awaiting us. Paul commented on this in [2 Cor. 5:1–4](#), where he spoke of our two garments, one earthly, the other heavenly. In Old Testament terms, these are the woolen and linen garments of the priests.

Paul says that we currently dwell in a mortal body, pictured both as a “house” or tabernacle, and as a garment. He says that our spiritual garment is being stored in heaven, much like the priests’ linen garments were stored in rooms beside the temple.

Moreover, Paul says that God has given us the Holy Spirit “*as a pledge*” ([2 Cor. 5:5](#)), or as collateral, as if God were indebted to us. Yet the point is that a tabernacle is a house, and the feast of Tabernacles portrays the overcomers living in a new house. At the same time they are said to receive the spiritual garments that belong to them. This is Paul’s commentary on the feast of Tabernacles, showing the prophetic meaning of dwelling in booths during the feast.

Spiritual Matter

The goal of creation is for the physical creation to manifest the glory of God. For this purpose it was created, and God will achieve His goal in the end. Sin is a temporary intrusion, not an inherent condition of material things.

In the end God is creating spiritual matter, that is, physical creation that carries the glory of God. It is the earth being filled with His glory as the waters cover the sea. What will this look like? Our only real example in Scripture is what Jesus’ body looked like after His resurrection. It was real, and it was physical, but no one actually recognized Him until He said something or did something. He was the same, yet different. Paul discussed this question when answering a critic (perhaps a Sadducee) in [1 Cor. 15:35](#),

³⁵ **But someone will say, “How are the dead raised? And with what kind of body do they come?”**

Paul’s answer is first that a body has to die in order to be raised, and he compares it to a seed that must be sown into the ground in order to bring forth life. As for the kind of body that comes in the resurrection, he says only that there

will be various types of flesh and various levels of glory. Beyond that, he says little. All we know for sure is that the “*natural body*” [literally, a *soulish* body] that is sown into the earth is raised a “*spiritual body*” ([1 Cor. 15:44](#)).

It is spiritual, but it is also a *body*. Jesus’ post-resurrection body proves this, and His body is the pattern for all who are yet to be raised. Paul says also in [1 Cor. 15:50](#),

⁵⁰ Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

The soul is in the blood, and Paul says that “*flesh and blood cannot inherit*.” Flesh and blood is from the original Adam, who was made a living soul ([1 Cor. 15:45](#)). He lost his inheritance, but the Last Adam has regained it as “*a life-giving spirit*.” So also is it with us. Our Adamic man cannot inherit the earth. The inheritors are those who are begotten by the Holy Spirit, even as Jesus was begotten.

The result, as Jesus said, was that He manifested Himself to His disciples as “*flesh and bones*” ([Luke 24:39](#)), not as “*flesh and blood*.” His blood was shed for us, leaving only flesh and bones. Beyond this, we can only speculate, but we know that whatever form of spiritual flesh we will take when ministering in the outer court, it will be appropriate for us. The important truth to know in this matter is that the purpose of God is to unite heaven and earth in a great marriage, so that the good purpose of creation may be fulfilled.

Chapter 17: Making New All Things

[Revelation 21:5](#) says,

⁵ And He who sits on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things [*panta*] new.” And He said, “Write, for these words are faithful and true.”

This statement from the Creator’s throne affirms that He is “*making all things new*.” It literally reads, “*new all things I make*.” At the first creation, He made all things (*panta*). Now He makes new *panta*, as the old *panta* is passing away. The scope is universal, for it is the same as with the first creation. As [John 1:3](#) says,

³ All things [*panta*] came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

Even those being judged in the lake of fire are part of God’s creation, and as part of the *panta*, they too are being made new. It is most advantageous to us to become a new creature during our life time in the first week of creation ([2 Cor. 5:17](#)). However, for most of humanity, this has not happened, and so it requires a future age to renew the heavens and the earth fully.

The Alpha and Omega

How do we know this? It is because the voice from the throne declares, “*These words are faithful and true*.” It is the voice of the great Amen in [Rev. 3:14](#), who is “*the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God*.” [Rev. 21:6](#), [7](#) continues,

⁶ And He said to me, “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost. ⁷ He who overcomes shall inherit these things, and I will be his God, and he will be My son.”

The same voice is thus identified with the One who spoke earlier in [Rev. 1:8](#), saying,

⁸ “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

These are Greek letters which express Hebrew thought patterns. Hence, *alpha* and *omega* is the translation of *alef* and *tav*, the first and last letters of the Hebrew alphabet. The *alef* signifies that the Creator is the First Cause of all things. The *tav* is His signature at the end, originally written as X or as a cross and which means literally, “a mark, sign, or signature.” So this statement is a kind of divine signature to ratify all that has been said previously. All that has been prophesied in this book has revealed the process by which the promises of God will be fulfilled.

The Thirsty Ones

In verse 6 God promises the water of life *without cost* to those who thirst. The implication is that the water of life will be costly to those who are not thirsty. Since verse 7 immediately speaks of the overcomers, it is plain that these are the thirsty ones and that they are the sons of God. Thirst is one of the major signs of an overcomer. Those who have no serious desire to know God and His ways are not overcomers, nor will they inherit life in the first resurrection.

Those who lack thirst will not be denied the water of life, but it will come at a cost to them at the resurrection. The unbelievers will be enslaved by the fiery law in the lake of fire. The non-overcoming believers will be “*saved yet so as through fire*” and will “*suffer loss*” ([1 Cor. 3:15](#)). To them, the water of life will be costly. They will also be denied immortality during the Messianic Age, and even if they live for many years into that Age, their ministries will be limited and short in comparison to those of the sons of God.

The Wicked Ones

[Revelation 21:8](#) continues,

⁸ But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

The list is long, but certainly not complete. Yet this much is sufficient to make the point that the lake of fire will judge all those who (in their life time) committed sin and promoted evil. These violated the law by not loving God and their neighbor as themselves, and they never came to the place of faith in Christ, whose blood might have justified them at the Great White Throne.

Yet this condemnation comes in the context of the previous statement: “*Behold, I am making all things new,*” or “*I am making new all things.*” Even those in the lake of fire are being made new, though not without cost. The divine goal cannot be accomplished apart from restoring the lawful order by implementing justice for all the sins ever committed since Adam.

In the overall sense, the blood of Christ paid for the sins of the whole world, establishing the FACT of universal salvation; but the TIMING of their salvation and manner in which they are saved depends upon their faith and works done during their life on earth. Most will be saved through fire, for God will hold them accountable for any sin that is not covered by faith in the blood of Jesus.

Chapter 18: Revealing the Lamb's Wife

[Revelation 21:9](#) says,

⁹ And one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues, came and spoke with me, saying, “Come here, I shall show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.”

The phrase, “*the bride, the wife of the Lamb*” carries a numeric value of 144 x 20. As we will see later, the number 144 is related to the 144,000 seen earlier, as well as the measure of the city's wall, which is 144 cubits ([Rev. 21:17, KJV](#)). The number twenty is the biblical number of redemption. Putting together 144 and 20, the underlying revelation presented here is that the overcomers have been redeemed.

The Angel

John does not tell us specifically which of the seven angels gave him this revelation. My own personal word from the Lord tells me that it is the seventh angel, called the *Angel of the Approaching Fullness of God*. This is the angel who was assigned to pour out the last plague into the air in [Rev. 16:17](#) with the word, “*It is done.*”

The fall of Babylon anticipates the New Jerusalem that replaces it. This angel's positive role, as his name implies, is to reveal “the Approaching Fullness of God.” In this case, it is to reveal the New Jerusalem. His calling is not only to show us “*the wife of the Lamb*,” but to show her filled with the Fullness of God.

A few verses earlier, in [Rev. 21:6](#), we saw a hint that this angel was about to step forward with revelation for John, for the voice from the throne said, “*It is done.*” This is the same statement given by the angel in [Rev. 16:17](#), where it referred to the overthrow of Babylon.

That was the negative work. In [Rev. 21:6](#) the word refers to the positive work of replacing Mystery Babylon with New Jerusalem and, as the word specifically says, replacing the old *panta* with the new.

A High Mountain View

[Revelation 21:10, 11](#) says,

¹⁰ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, ¹¹ having the glory of God. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper.

Being carried away (or conveyed) in the Spirit here does not necessarily mean that his body was transported to an earthly mountaintop. Such an experience can, indeed, happen, as with Ezekiel, who was conveyed to the exiles of the House of Israel in Assyria ([Ezekiel 3:14, 15](#)). But John's experience was not physical. Rather, his experience was similar to an earlier one in [Rev. 17:3](#), where John had been carried away, this time “*into a wilderness*,” to view the great harlot. In Revelation 21 John is carried away in the Spirit to a high mountain to view the Lamb's wife. First the counterfeit (that is, the harlot) was revealed, and then the true bride was revealed.

John's spirit was conveyed to a mountain in the spiritual realm, where he could be in a position to view the Lamb's wife coming, or emerging, out of heaven and into the earthly realm. There John saw the holy city, no longer called “*new Jerusalem*,” as in verse 2, but simply “*Jerusalem*.” In other words, this city (at this point) is the true *and only* Jerusalem, fulfilling the positive prophecies given to that city by the prophets.

The earthly Jerusalem, by this time, has been cast out, even as Hagar was to be cast out ([Gal. 4:25, 30](#)), leaving only Sarah, the mother of all Kingdom inheritors to be revealed in all her glory. There is no more competition at this point in time, for the new Jerusalem has been identified and certified as the wife of the Lamb. Earlier prophecies of God's

choice had gone largely unheeded, because the children of the flesh had wanted their own mother (“Hagar”) to be the chosen wife.

But the angel shows John the chosen wife of the Lamb “*having the glory of God*” ([Rev. 21:11](#)). In past generations, the glory of God had rested over the ark of the covenant, which had been given first to Shiloh and later to the earthly Jerusalem. When the glory departed from each of those cities on account of their fleshly corruption, the full glory is not seen again until the new Jerusalem emerges with that same glory.

Her glory is described as “crystal-clear jasper” in order to connect her with the One sitting on the throne in [Rev. 4:3](#), who also appeared “*like a jasper stone*.” The wife of the Lamb, then, is given the same glory as her Husband.

Walls and Gates

[Revelation 21:12](#) says,

¹² It had a great and high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and names were written on them, which are those of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel.

The predominance of the number twelve suggests that the city is fully characterized by divine government. There is no rebellion or disagreement. She is not merely *under* divine government—as if she might be under constraint for fear of straying—but rather, she is the *executor* of divine government. She fulfills the original purpose of marriage as “*bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh*” ([Gen. 2:23](#)).

[Zech. 2:5](#) describes the wall of the new Jerusalem as “*a wall of fire*.” His metaphor reveals that a wall is a boundary, and in the case of this city, it is a moral boundary established by the “*fiery law*” of God ([Deut. 33:2, KJV](#)). John does not mention the fire, but tells us in verse 17 that it is 144 cubits high. This identifies the wall with the overcomers, made from the same “*living stones*” that are found in the temple ([1 Peter 2:5](#)).

Each living stone carries the fire and glory of God. As the law is written upon their hearts, all that they are and do comes out of the nature of Christ. This is actually referenced in [Deut. 33:2, 3](#) (KJV), where we read,

² ... From His hand went a fiery law for them. ³ Yea, He loved the people; all His saints are in Thy hand; and they sat down at Thy feet; everyone shall receive of Thy words.

God’s hand is pictured sending forth “*a fiery law*,” and in His hand are the saints. In other words, the saints of God are identified with the fiery law itself, and the fact that “*everyone shall receive of Thy words*” shows that these saints have heard the word and that the law is written in their hearts. This, then, qualifies them to rule others according to the mind of God. So the wall of Jerusalem is composed of living stones in whose hearts are written the divine law. They are pictured as the wall—the standard of morality, the moral boundary of the city.

[Revelation 21:13, 14](#) continues,

¹³ There were three gates on the east and three gates on the north and three gates on the south and three gates on the west. ¹⁴ And the wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

If we go by the description of the gates in Ezekiel 48, we see that the specific tribes of Israel are associated with the gates in this way:

North Gates ([Ezekiel 48:31](#)):

Reuben

Judah

Levi

East Gates ([Ezekiel 48:32](#)):

Joseph

Benjamin

Dan

South Gates ([Ezekiel 48:33](#)):

Simeon

Issachar

Zebulun

West Gates ([Ezekiel 48:34](#)):

Gad

Asher

Naphtali

We have no biblical statements regarding the positions of the twelve apostles who represent each of the tribes. We can be certain only that the apostles represent the tribes, because they believe in Christ. [Matt. 19:28](#) says,

²⁸ And Jesus said to them, “Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

The purpose of a city wall is not to keep people out, but to restrict their access to the city by channeling them through the gates. This protects the city and its inhabitants from the wicked who may wish to destroy through invasion or to infiltrate the city for nefarious purposes. Jesus said in [John 10:1, 2](#),

¹ “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbs up some other way, he is a thief and a robber. ² But he who enters by the door is a shepherd of the sheep”...

⁷ Jesus therefore said to them again, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.”

This principle applies to the walls and gates of the heavenly Jerusalem, which, like the earthly city, had twelve gates, or doors. Jesus is the door, but He manifests Himself in twelve ways, each gate associated with a different tribe of Israel and with the twelve apostles ([Rev. 21:14](#)).

Hence, Jesus is all twelve gates, but each gate is a different governmental administration that is pictured by the twelve apostles and the twelve tribes of Israel. Yet all serve the same basic purpose as gatekeepers that ensure that only those who have true faith in Christ are able to enter the city.

Chapter 19: The Wall and the Gates

The layout of the new Jerusalem is prophetic, as are all of its features. [Rev. 21:15, 16](#) reads this way in The Concordant Version:

¹⁵ And he who is speaking with me had a measure, a golden reed, that he should be measuring the city, and its portals, and its wall. ¹⁶ And the city is lying four square: and its length is as much as the breadth. And he measures the city with the reed to twelve thousand stadia. Its length and breadth and height are equal.

I quote this version because the NASB converts the biblical measurements into modern units of measure, destroying the prophetic element in the verse. The “*twelve thousand stadia*” they convert to “*fifteen hundred miles*,” which is an entirely different number.

A stadia was about one-eighth of a mile. This measurement was not of Hebrew origin, though it was commonly used throughout Judea. So in this case we have no choice but to use its Greek definition, which fixed the length of a stadia at 600 *podes*. A *pode* was roughly the length of a man’s foot and corresponds generally to what is called one “foot.” We may think of a single *stadion*, then, as being 600 feet (or 184.9 meters).

12,000 stadia, then, is 7,200,000 feet, which (by dividing by 5,280 feet per mile) converts to 1,363.6 miles for the perimeter of the city. Since it is “four square,” the city would be 341 miles on each side. These numbers give us some perspective in visualizing the stated size of the city. But for prophetic purposes, these numbers are quite meaningless, for they ought not to be taken literally.

The Glory of God

The prophecy rests in the number 12,000, which means *glorified divine government*. Essentially, each of the 12 gates, 12 tribes, and 12 apostles are represented by a thousand. The number 1000 means the glory of God, so this suggests that the 12 tribes and apostles are showing forth the glory of God.

Paul tells us in [Rom. 3:23](#), “*for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*” The original sinner was Adam, who died at the age of 930 ([Gen. 5:5](#)). He fell short of the glory of God by 70 years, and so also 70 is the number of Restoration (to the glory of God). How are we to be restored to God’s glory? We must enter one of the 12 gates; we must become Israelites (“join” a tribe) through one of the tribes of Israel represented by the gates; and we must have faith in the word that was preached by the apostles, the gatekeepers.

Of course, becoming an Israelite is not about genealogy, for even Jacob himself was not born an Israelite. He was given the name Israel after wrestling with the angel Peniel, “the face of God.” He had been a believer all of his life, but when he encountered Peniel, the Angel of the Feast of Tabernacles, he became a new creature, prophetically speaking. Years later, Moses manifested the presence (“face”) of God when he came off the mount with his face glowing ([Exodus 34:29](#)).

Hence, the prophetic picture implied by the 12 gates and the perimeter of the walls is that the city itself contains the glory of God, and is governed by the law of God—which David said was “*perfect, restoring the soul*” in [Psalm 19:7](#). All who enter are restored to the glory of God, which is their inheritance.

The Wall

The Concordant Version of [Rev. 21:17](#) reads,

¹⁷ And he measures its wall of a hundred forty-four cubits of a human measure, which is that of the messenger [angel].

The NASB tells us that the wall was “*seventy-two yards*,” hiding again the underlying prophecy in the biblical numbers. The number 144 is what Scripture sets forth as being important, though in this case even 72 can be seen as part of the revelation, because it is half of 144. Yet John set forth the number 144 in order to identify the walls with the 144,000—the resurrected overcomers having the glory of God. We have shown the significance of 144 and 144,000 and even 288,000 earlier in our study of Revelation 7 and 14.

[Revelation 21:18](#) (CV) continues,

¹⁸ And the building material in its wall is jasper, and the city is clear gold, like clear glass.

The wall is not made of ordinary rock, but of jasper. Isaiah prophesies of the New Jerusalem, telling us in [Isaiah 60:18, 19](#) (NASB),

¹⁸ Violence will not be heard again in your land, nor devastation or destruction within your borders; but you will call your walls salvation [*Yeshua*], and your gates praise [*tehilla*]. ¹⁹ No longer will you have the sun for light by day, nor for brightness will the moon give you light; but you will have the Lord for an everlasting light, and your God for your glory.

I have included verse 19 above in order to show that Isaiah was speaking of the New Jerusalem, because, as we will see shortly, John refers to this characteristic of “Jerusalem” a few verses later. Isaiah’s entire chapter was a description, not of the old Jerusalem, but of the new. He speaks prophetically, telling us that “*you will call your walls salvation and your gates praise.*”

This is one of many prophecies concerning Yeshua (Jesus) and His body. Jasper represents the character of Yeshua. It relates to the city’s “*wall of fire*” ([Zech. 2:5](#)) and to the “*fiery law*” ([Deut. 33:2, KJV](#)) that establishes its moral boundary. As we have already shown, the fiery law is in God’s right hand, and so are the saints. In fact, Jesus Himself spoke of these, saying in [John 10:27–29](#),

²⁷ My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; ²⁸ and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish, and no man shall snatch them out of My hand. ²⁹ My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand.

So we understand that the 144-cubit wall represents the overcomers, who are in God’s hand (as His own possession, or peculiar treasure), manifesting the nature of God (“fire”) and having the law written upon their hearts. Collectively, they represent the body of Christ in the New Creation Man that is being formed as part of the new heaven and the new earth.

The Gates

[Isaiah 60:18](#), quoted earlier, also tells us that the gates were called “praise.” The Hebrew word translated “praise” here is *tehilla*. It carries the same basic meaning as *Judah*, which also means “praise,” and no doubt both Isaiah and John intended for us to make that connection. *Tehilla* is from the root word *halal*, “to shine, praise, boast, glory.” This is also the word from which we derive *Hallelujah*, or “praise Yahweh.”

The name *Judah* differs in that it is built upon the letter *yood*, which means “a hand.” The name *Judah* depicts a man with raised hands in worship and praise. Perhaps this did not fit Isaiah’s word picture describing the gates of the city, so he used *tehilla*. This word draws attention to one whose voice glorifies God, rather than to his upraised hands that praise Him.

Regardless of this, however, since Yeshua came through *Judah* in His first appearance, the new Jerusalem is surrounded by the character of Yeshua and the testimony of praise. No one has access to the New Jerusalem without going through a gate of praise.

True praise is not merely a kind of spiritual password, but is an expression of one's being. Even now, true praise is not telling God what a wonderful God He is—for He already knows Himself and needs no one to make Him feel good about Himself. God is not so concerned about our words of praise as He is about our actions that spring from our hearts. The highest form of praise is to manifest His glory, to be like Him, and to be in full agreement with Him.

The Foundation Stones

[Revelation 21:19](#), [20](#) says,

¹⁹ The foundation stones of the city wall were adorned with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation stone was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third chalcedony; the fourth, emerald; ²⁰ the fifth, sardonyx, the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoprase; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst.

The wall of Jerusalem is said to be “*adorned with every kind of precious stone.*” The picture being painted is not of huge precious stones being laid as foundation stones for the wall, but rather that the wall itself is made of jasper ([Rev. 21:18](#)) and the foundation stones are adorned with various other stones.

As usual, spiritual principles are set forth in physical terms. It appears that precious stones in general represent the works that men do by faith, at least in Paul's comment in [1 Cor. 3:11–13](#),

¹¹ For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹² Now if any man builds upon [adorns?] the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, ¹³ each man's work will become evident ...

Paul's metaphor shows the possibility of building upon the foundation various things that represent “*each man's work.*” There are combustible materials such as “*wood, hay, stubble,*” which can be burned by the fiery law, and there are things that survive the fire, such as “*gold, silver, precious stones.*”

Paul, of course, seems to apply this to the foundation of a spiritual temple ([1 Cor. 3:16](#)). John's Revelation applies it to the foundation stones of the wall around the city. Nonetheless, in the absence of any other explanation of the meaning of these stones (when used to adorn foundation stones), we cannot go far astray in applying Paul's metaphor to Revelation 21.

Of course, the foundation stones of the New Jerusalem have no wood, hay, or stubble. Only the pure faith-works of the apostles adorn these 12 stones. In that sense, are we not all adorned, for better or for worse, with the works that we do? So let us not adorn ourselves with works that will shame us in the day of judgment.

The High Priest's Ephod

In [Exodus 28:17–20](#) we find the list of 12 precious stones that once adorned the high priest's ephod. The stones were laid out “four-square” ([Exodus 28:16](#)), like the New Jerusalem ([Rev. 21:16](#)), as if to suggest that the high priest was adorned by a modular city. The stones can be viewed as the same foundation stones as seen in New Jerusalem. The order of stones is different, because in a city wall all of the stones must be placed on the perimeter, whereas on the breastplate, stones are also placed inside.

Comparing the stones themselves in the order in which they are listed:

<u>Exodus (NASB)</u>	<u>Revelation (NASB)</u>	<u>Revelation (C.V.)</u>
Ruby	Jasper	Jasper
Topaz	Sapphire	Lapis Lazuli
Emerald	Chalcedony	Chalcedony
Turquoise	Emerald	Emerald

Sapphire	Sardonyx	Sardonyx
Diamond	Sardius	Carnelian
Jacinth	Chrysolite	Topaz
Agate	Beryl	Beryl
Amethyst	Topaz	Peridot
Beryl	Chrysoprase	Chrysoprase
Onyx	Jacinth	Amethyst
Jasper	Amethyst	Garnet

Only five of the twelve stones in Revelation 21 are clearly the same as the ones in Exodus: Jasper, Sapphire, Emerald, Beryl, and Sardonyx (or onyx). Because Exodus was written in Hebrew and Revelation in Greek, it is possible that other stones may actually be the same but are named differently. Translations differ as well, because many names of the stones are unknown or disputed.

The stones are specifically identified with the twelve tribes of Israel in [Exodus 28:21](#). In [Rev. 21:12](#) the tribes are identified with the twelve *gates*. In [Rev. 21:14](#) the twelve *foundation stones* are inscribed with the names of the twelve apostles, and these are adorned with the twelve precious stones, setting forth their works of faith.

The Pearls

[Revelation 21:21](#) continues,

²¹ And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was a single pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

This verse is the origin of the expression “the pearly gates.” The name of the apostles on the twelve gates has also given rise to the idea that Saint Peter is the gatekeeper into heaven, empowered to decide who gets in and who goes to a lower region. Peter, presumably, stands at the East Gate leading into the courts of the temple, holding the keys of the kingdom. Such is the church tradition.

As we saw earlier, [Isaiah 60:18](#) says, “*you will call your walls salvation and your gates praise.*” Hence, in Revelation 21, “praise” (*tehillah*) is represented by pearls. What does this mean? As I wrote earlier, *tehillah* is more than words of praise. It means “to shine, praise, boast, or glory.” True praise is to become an expression of His nature. Speaking words of praise without a corresponding change of nature (heart) is meaningless and empty.

Therefore, the gates of praise work together with the walls of fire by restricting entrance to anyone who is yet in disagreement with the character of Christ. The gates of praise are open to all who truly manifest the divine nature, praising Him by their being, and not merely by their words.

Streets of Pure Gold

[Rev. 21:21](#) also tells us that “*the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.*” I have been told by an expert that pure gold is transparent. Most gold today that is of investment grade is only .999 or .9999 fine, leaving a tiny amount of impurities in the gold that prevent it from being transparent.

When Jeremiah lamented over the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple, he wrote in [Lam. 4:1](#),

¹ How dark the gold has become, how the pure gold has changed! The sacred stones [or the stones of the sanctuary] are poured out at the corner of every street.

The streets of the earthly Jerusalem were never paved with gold, but in building the temple, Solomon “*overlaid the floor of the house with gold, inner and outer sanctuaries*” ([1 Kings 6:30](#)). This was to signify that the priests who ministered in that temple were “walking” in the purity of the divine nature.

In that sense, the floor of the temple carries the same meaning as the streets of a city, except that streets of gold signify that all of the people walk according to the divine nature. A street signifies daily life, not only among the priests, but with everyone in the city.

On the other hand, the streets of New Jerusalem are said to be paved with gold so pure that it is transparent. It is a prophetic way of telling us that all who enter into the city must come through the gates of praise (pearl), having the divine nature. When they walk the streets of the city, their thoughts, actions, and their very lives themselves are transparent to all, and yet they are unashamed.

Why the Wall and the Gates are Needed

This entire prophecy about the New Jerusalem is given after the Great White Throne judgment, during which time many are judged by the lake of fire. I have already shown how the Age after the Great White Throne is a time where sinners (debtors) must be sold as slaves in order to learn righteousness from their new slave-owners.

In other words, the Restoration of All Things is a process that is not completed until the great Jubilee sets all men free after 49,000 years—or, as [Psalm 105:8](#) says, “*to a thousand generations.*” It appears that a generation in this sense is a Jubilee cycle of 49 years.

During this long period of time, there will be unperfected people still being processed, still learning to be led by the Spirit, still being refined in the baptism of the Holy Spirit and its fire, and still not worthy of entering the gates of the city or of walking its streets of gold.

For this reason, there is still a need for the wall of fire and the gates of praise. Whether or not this city is literal, and whether there will be parts of the earth where only the perfected ones may set their foot, it is clear that *some will yet be ineligible to enter the city*. The perfected ones, of course, will be able to go where they wish without restriction, because Christ will then be King over the whole earth. But the majority of humanity will be restricted while they are being trained in the principles of righteousness.

If this restriction is purely spiritual, then it means that those who are enslaved to the overcomers under Christ will not be able to attain absolute perfection (transparent gold) until the Jubilee. On the other hand, if God sees fit to set up a specific place on earth for the New Jerusalem, then only the righteous will be eligible to enter its gates.

In my opinion, neither view can be proven to the satisfaction of all, so we leave it to each to come to his own conclusion. It is important only to know that during that final Age of Judgment, many will remain unperfected and will live under certain restrictions until the great Jubilee sets all creation free.

Chapter 20: City of Light

Regarding the New Jerusalem, we read in [Rev. 21:22](#),

²² And I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God, the Almighty, and the Lamb [*arnion*], are its temple.

John says that there is no *physical* temple in the New Jerusalem, for it is unnecessary. The city has a *better* temple that Paul said was being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Jesus Christ being the corner stone ([Eph. 2:20–22](#)). This is the true temple, not a physical, rebuilt temple in Jerusalem that so many are expecting.

This temple includes more than “the Lord God” and Jesus Christ. It includes the body of Christ as well. Jesus is the *amnos* (“Lamb” of God) in [John 1:29](#) and [36](#). The *arnion* are those whom Peter was to feed and to care for in [John 21:15](#). As we have already shown earlier, John never uses the word *amnos* in the book of Revelation. It is always *arnion*, and it refers to the complete Head and body of Christ.

In other words, John affirms Paul’s statement in [1 Cor. 3:16](#), “*Do you not know that you are a temple of God?*” That temple has taken thousands of years to build, for it must include people from every generation until the emergence of the New Jerusalem, where the temple is complete. This is the temple that Haggai foresaw in [Haggai 2:9](#), whose glory would be greater than the temple of Solomon.

The New Light Source

[Revelation 21:23](#) continues,

²³ And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb.

John was referring to the prophecy in [Isaiah 60:19](#),

¹⁹ No longer will you have the sun for light by day, nor for brightness will the moon give you light; but you will have the Lord for an everlasting light, and your God for your glory.

When Jesus was transfigured on the mount in [Matt. 17:2](#), the light within Him shined forth in radiance:

² And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light.

We must also compare this to Moses’ experience, when he came off another mount with his face shining. [Exodus 34:29](#) says,

²⁹ And it came about when Moses was coming down from Mount Sinai (and the two tablets of the testimony were in Moses’ hand as he was coming down from the mountain), that Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because of his speaking with Him.

At that time, Moses found it necessary to veil his face in order not to frighten the people, because even though this was a New Covenant experience, he ministered to Old Covenant people. But this veil is removed in Christ, Paul says in [2 Cor. 3:13–16](#),

¹³ and are not as Moses, who used to put a veil over his face that the sons of Israel might not look intently at the end of what was fading away. ¹⁴ But their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ. ¹⁵ But to this

day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart; ¹⁶ but whenever a man turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

The light shining from Moses' face was veiled to hide the light, but *the veil did not hinder Moses' vision*, but rather the vision of those under the Old Covenant. In other words, those who depend upon their Old Covenant vows to save them have a veil over their heart, preventing them from being transfigured like Moses. That veil is removed only when men have faith in the promises of God and the Mediator of the New Covenant, who is called to bring to pass those things that God has promised by the strength of His own will.

When Christians today place their faith in their own ability to make good on their vows of obedience, they remain under the Old Covenant, and "*a veil lies over their heart.*" In other words, they are yet ineligible for transfiguration, for the light is unable to penetrate the Old Covenant veil. Other evidence of such a veil is set forth by their inability to see beyond a physical temple in Jerusalem where they think Jesus will live and where Levitical priests will make animal sacrifices on its altar.

The New Jerusalem has its own light source coming from within. It needs no light from the sun or moon. We are not told if there will even be a sun or moon in those days, for John's focus is upon the inner light.

The Light of Teaching

[Revelation 21:24](#) continues,

²⁴ And the nations shall walk by its light, and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory into it.

This is a reference to [Isaiah 60:3](#),

³ And nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.

Again, it is plain that Isaiah was not speaking of the old Jerusalem, but of the new, for this is how John interprets and applies the prophecy. This has a dual fulfillment. First, the nations and kings "*bring their glory into it,*" that is, into the city. Secondly, the nations "*walk by its light,*" that is, by the revelation of truth coming from Christ and His body (temple).

This assumes that nations and kings continue to exist at that time. In order for Christ to be "*King of kings,*" there must be kings. In order for Christ to be "*Lord of lords,*" there must be lords. Hence, kings, nations, and national boundaries will continue to exist while the nations learn the ways of God. It is not an instantaneous transformation of all things on earth. [Isaiah 2:2](#), [3](#) says,

² ... and all nations will stream to it. ³ And many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that He may teach us concerning His ways, and that we may walk in His paths." For the law will go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

While many today apply this to the earthly Jerusalem and to the earthly "Zion," John applies the prophecy to the New Jerusalem. Furthermore, [Heb. 12:22](#) says,

²² But you have come to Mount Zion [*Sion*, KJV] and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels ...

This "Mount Zion" is associated with the heavenly Jerusalem, not with the earthly city by the same name. It is, in fact, Mount *Sion*, or Mount Hermon, which is the place where Jesus was transfigured. [Deut. 4:48](#) tells us that Mount Sion is Mount Hermon. Hence, Mount Sion is the prophetic place where the people of the New Covenant gather to

participate in Jesus' transfiguration experience. Nonetheless, this place of transfiguration now transcends any earthly location, for even Mount Hermon (Sion) was only a type of something greater.

The Open Gates

[Revelation 21:25–27](#) concludes,

²⁵ And in the daytime (for there shall be no night there) its gates shall never be closed; ²⁶ and they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it; ²⁷ and nothing unclean and no one who practices abomination and lying shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

John was referring to [Isaiah 60:11](#), saying,

¹¹ And your gates will be open continually; they will not be closed day or night, so that men may bring to you the wealth [*chayil*, “strength, wealth, ability, resources”] of the nations, with their kings led in procession.

Where Isaiah speaks of the *chayil* (“resources”) of the nations being brought to Jerusalem, John interprets this to mean “*the glory and honor of the nations*.” This is the true wealth of the nations. It is not about setting up an oppressive tax upon other nations, as many carnally-minded and vindictive men have taught.

It refers to the fact that these kings understand and believe fully that they are mere stewards of whatever portions of the earth they have been given and that Jesus Christ is the rightful Heir of all things. Therefore, all of their resources are used for the glory and honor of God, as was the intent of the Creator from the beginning. The gates of the city will be open continually. In past times, city gates were closed at night, but in this great city there is no night.

During this time, it appears that there will still be people who are unable to gain access to the city. For this reason, though the gates remain open, the walls remain, and only those who “praise” the Lord can enter the city. No doubt the number of ineligible people will diminish over time, but yet John implies in [Rev. 21:27](#) that there are still those who practice “*abomination and lying*.”

John was probably alluding to the prophecy in [Isaiah 52:1](#),

¹ Awake, awake, clothe yourself in your strength, O Zion; Clothe yourself in your beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city, for the uncircumcised and the unclean will no more come into you.

Although this is expressed in Old Covenant terms, it has a New Covenant fulfillment. True circumcision is not outward, but inward ([Rom. 2:28, 29](#)), and the unclean are those who have not been washed by the blood of Christ and the water of the word ([John 15:3](#)).

[Joel 3:17](#) also prophesies,

¹⁷ Then you will know that I am the Lord your God, dwelling in Zion My holy mountain. So Jerusalem will be holy, and strangers [*zur*, “foreigners”] will pass through it no more.

This is not an ethnic statement about Jerusalem being for Israelites only. This is plain, because it was never against the law for a foreigner to visit the city or its temple. In fact, the temple was to be a house of prayer for all people ([Isaiah 56:6, 7](#)), including foreigners. This was known even to Solomon when he dedicated his temple for all men to worship God, regardless of ethnicity ([1 Kings 8:41–43](#)).

Hence, the term “foreigner” refers to someone who has not been cleansed by the word and who has not received heart circumcision, which is the sign of the New Covenant. John says that the only ones who will have access to the city are

“those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.” The list includes those who have been begotten by God, not those who have been begotten by natural flesh. These, Paul says, *“are no longer strangers and aliens,”* but *“are fellow citizens with the saints”* ([Eph. 2:19](#)).

This ends chapter 21 of the book of Revelation, but John’s description of the New Jerusalem continues into the next chapter.

Chapter 21: The River of Life

[Revelation 22:1, 2](#) says,

¹ Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb ² in the middle of the street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

First, the KJV reads “*pure river of water of life*,” but the Greek texts do not include the word “pure.” Of course, this does not mean that the water is impure. It is a matter of correcting the translation as the NASB above has done.

Secondly, because the original Greek text had no punctuation and did not separate the words into verses, the KJV of verse 2 should read: “*In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river was there the tree of life.*” This is a strange contradiction, because it seems to say that the tree of life was in the middle of the street as well as on both sides of the river.

The NASB puts the period at the end of “street,” making it say that the water of life was flowing from the throne down the middle of the street. (See above.) Punctuation makes a difference in how we read and understand the passage, and this seems to make more sense.

Twelve Kinds of Fruit

The tree of life brings forth twelve kinds of fruit. The New Testament speaks of the fruit of the Spirit, nine of which are listed in [Gal. 5:22, 23](#),

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Along with goodness, two more kinds of fruit are listed in [Eph. 5:9](#),

⁹ for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth.

In this verse, “goodness” is a repeat from [Gal. 5:22](#), so this makes eleven kinds of fruit. The final kind of fruit is *sanctification* (or holiness), found in [Rom. 6:22 \(KJV\)](#). This makes a total of twelve kinds of fruit, listed in the New Testament, that we are to exhibit to the world.

The Tree of Life

The Bible begins with the Tree of Life in the book of Genesis and ends with it as well. Its most obvious feature (as indicated by its name) is that it is the source of immortality, or life. This function would be quite meaningless if we were to consider everyone to be already immortal. In fact, Adam and Eve were cut off from this Tree in [Gen. 3:22–24](#) in order to prevent them from being immortal in their sinful state.

Likewise, in [Rev. 21:27](#) and [22:14](#) it is clear that only the righteous are to have access to this Tree of Life. Speaking of Christ, Paul says in [1 Tim. 6:16](#) that He “*alone possesses immortality*.” The clear implication is that the unrighteous do not have immortality. Immortality is an issue pertaining to the soul and body, not one’s spirit *per se*. To attain immortality is to reverse the full effects of the curse of death that plague all men on account of Adam’s sin ([Rom. 5:12](#)).

The Water of Life in Ezekiel

John's vision of the water of life in Revelation 21 is similar to the one found in Ezekiel 47. Only by comparing the two can we get a better picture of this scene. [Ezekiel 47:1](#) says,

¹ Then He brought me back to the door of the house; and behold, water was flowing from under the threshold of the house toward the east, for the house faced east. And the water was flowing down from under the right side of the house from south of the altar.

The “house” is the temple, or “the House of the Lord.” Many have interpreted Ezekiel's visions in chapters 40–48 in a carnal manner, as if to say that the Jews will soon build a temple on the old site in Jerusalem, where Jesus will live and reign on earth, much like a human monarch. Such people assume that the New Jerusalem is simply the old Jerusalem restored on the old location, a building made with wood, stones, and gold decorations.

But as we have already shown, John tells us in [Rev. 21:22](#) that this city has no need for such a temple, because the people themselves serve as its temple. Ezekiel writes about the New Jerusalem while using Old Covenant pictures. But this does not mean that his words must be interpreted through Old Covenant eyes, as so many do. If it had been built in Ezekiel's time, it would indeed have been a carnal structure as described. But the new temple must be viewed in the same light as our view of the new Jerusalem and new Mount Zion (Sion).

It is from this new temple that the river flows, according to [Rev. 22:1](#). Ezekiel's vision came to him in an Old Covenant context that the people would understand, with a river flowing from Jerusalem's temple to the Dead Sea. Flowing water was a vital commodity in the desert landscape, so no doubt the people of that day interpreted his vision in quite literal terms. They could not yet know the greater plan of God.

And yet Ezekiel's river is miraculous in another way. The river is said to be only ankle deep at its source but becomes deeper as it flows across the desert, until it is so deep and swift that it cannot be forded (47:5). This is, of course, the opposite of natural rivers, unless other tributaries flow into it along the way. But the prophet says nothing of other rivers, nor did any such rivers exist between Jerusalem and the Dead Sea. So this surely provides people with a clue that this is no ordinary river.

The Tree of Life

[Ezekiel 47:7](#) says,

⁷ Now when I had returned, behold, on the bank of the river there were very many trees on the one side and on the other.

In John's vision in Revelation 22, there is only one tree, the Tree of Life, on both sides of the river. In Ezekiel 47, there appear to be “*very many trees*” on both sides of the river.

Whether the trees are all one tree or whether we are to view this as a “forest” having many trees is a matter of prophetic perspective. Spiritual things are often pictured as physical objects, but spirit is not subject to the same physical rules. Spiritual objects do not take up space, nor are they subject to time. But because our carnal minds cannot comprehend spiritual things, we need earthly metaphors to understand them. When we get different metaphors from different prophets, we should not interpret them as contradictory.

It seems to me that John's description of twelve kinds of fruit indicates many types of trees—all of which are collectively a Tree of Life. In [Ezekiel 47:12](#) we read,

¹² And by the river on its bank, on one side and on the other, will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither, and their fruit will not fail. They will bear every month because their water flows from the sanctuary, and their fruit will be for food and their leaves for healing.

The “healing” is non-specific in this verse, but verses 8–10 make it clear that its primary purpose is to heal the Dead Sea and make it habitable for fish. Swarms of fish are a biblical symbol for life itself.

The Dead Sea

Probably the most important factor is that while Ezekiel sees the land of Canaan from Jerusalem to the Dead Sea, John interprets it more universally. Ezekiel sees the river healing the Dead Sea, while John sees it healing *the nations* by means of the fruit-bearing trees.

In other words, the lifeless Dead Sea represents the nations, *the dead sea of humanity*. All are dead, even as they walk the earth, because Adam’s sin made all men mortal. When the living water flows into this Dead Sea, fish can live there. If the Dead Sea represents the nations, then the fish represent the *people* of all nations. The swarms of fish that are to be seen in the formerly “Dead” Sea now make it a Living Sea.

By understanding the prophecy of the Dead Sea, we should also note that Ezekiel saw this as a process, not as an instantaneous event. We ought, then, to link this Dead Sea with the Lake of Fire, where the people remain under judgment as they learn righteousness until the Creation Jubilee. The purpose of divine judgment is to reverse the curse of death upon mankind that came through Adam’s sin, even as John says in [Rev. 22:3](#),

³ And there shall no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His bond-servants shall serve Him.

The Nations and the Overcomers

God will maintain a distinction between the “bond-servants” of God and the “nations” who are healed and brought to life as swarms of fish. Of those bondservants, we read in [Rev. 22:4](#) and [5](#),

⁴ and they shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. ⁵ ... and they shall reign for the ages of the ages [*aionas ton aionian*].

The overcomers are part of the temple of God and the New Jerusalem, where God saw fit to place His name after forsaking the old Jerusalem’s temple as Shiloh ([Jer. 7:12–14](#)). The New Temple is alive, because it is built of living stones upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Jesus Christ being the Chief Cornerstone ([Eph. 2:20–22](#); [1 Peter 2:5](#)).

The place where God writes His name has changed over the centuries. God told the Israelites to “*go now to My place which was in Shiloh, where I made My name dwell at the first*” ([Jer. 7:12](#)). He then spoke of the temple in Jerusalem, saying, “*Therefore, I will do the house which is called by My name... as I did to Shiloh*” ([Jer. 7:14](#)). In other words, God’s name had been removed from Shiloh and placed in Jerusalem. Yet because Jerusalem had become more corrupt than Shiloh had been, God was about to remove His name from that location as well.

The final location for His name is on the foreheads of those who are sealed—marked with God’s signature. This is the location of His new house. Although the people are pictured in terms of a temple, it does not mean that God intends to put His name on a stone structure in Jerusalem, as He did in past years.

[Revelation 21:5](#) says,

⁵ And there shall no longer be any night; and they shall not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God shall illumine them; and they shall reign forever and ever [*aionas ton aionian*, “the ages of the ages”].

These who have the mark (name) of God on their foreheads will have light within themselves and will need no external light sources. Their bodies will be transfigured to resemble Jesus’ body when He was transfigured on the mount in

[Matt. 17:2](#). This is, of course, the reward of the saints, the purpose of the feast of Tabernacles, and the goal of history. They will reign for the ages of the ages, teaching and training the rest of humanity in the ways of God until all are fully restored and God is all in all.

[Rev. 22:5](#) is the proper end of the revelation given to John. It ends with the great revelation of the river of life flowing out to all. The tree of life is finally available for all, after being guarded by cherubim that were assigned to restrict man's access to immortality since [Gen. 3:24](#). The nations are healed by the leaves of the tree of life, and its fruit sustains them. The curse is removed from the earth ([Rev. 22:3](#)), which had been imposed since Adam's sin ([Gen. 3:17](#)).

God lays claim to (and owns) all, for *“His name shall be on their foreheads”* ([Rev. 22:4](#)). Further, the full light of the knowledge of Christ shines throughout the earth, as the New Covenant promise is fulfilled, *“for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them”* ([Heb. 8:11](#)). The climactic statement in [Rev. 22:5](#) is *“and they shall reign for the ages of the ages.”*

Chapter 22: The Addendum

[Rev. 22:6](#) begins John's addendum to close out the book, bringing us back to the present (from John's perspective):

⁶ And he said to me, “These words are faithful and true”; and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent His angel to show to His bond-servants the things which must shortly take place.

It is not fully clear who is speaking to John. The NASB assumed that it is an angel who says, “*These words are faithful and true,*” and hence, it does not capitalize the word *he* at the beginning of the verse above. However, as we read earlier ([Rev. 21:5](#)), the same words were spoken by “*He who sits on the throne.*” Either the angel was bearing witness to the One sitting on the throne, or Christ was repeating Himself.

The NASB also ends the quotation after the word *true*, whereas it seems more natural to me that the quotation continues through the verse and also through the next verse. Christ spoke that entire passage. This is how the KJV renders it. The Emphatic Diaglott reads:

⁶ ... “These words are faithful and true; and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent His angel to show His bond-servants the things which must shortly take place. ⁷ And behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book.”

By extending the quotation, the statement, “*I am coming quickly,*” identifies the Speaker here as Jesus Christ. The “Red Letter” versions put this and the rest of the verse in red, but not the earlier words. It seems to me that the entire passage above ought to be in red letters. Yet this view is not crucial, because whether the words were spoken by an angel or by Jesus Christ, “*these words are faithful and true.*”

The angel mentioned in verse 6, who was “*sent...to show His bond-servants the things which must shortly take place,*” seems to be the angel who came forth earlier in [Rev. 21:9](#). This was the Angel of the Approaching Fullness of God, who stepped forward to reveal the final revelations of the bride, the New Jerusalem, the tree of life, and the river flowing out of the city which reverse the curse and bring life to all. All of this revelation fits the name of the angel perfectly, for through him the truth of the Restoration of All Things is presented.

John Tries to Worship the Angel

[Revelation 22:8](#), [9](#) says,

⁸ And I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed me these things. ⁹ And he said to me, “Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book; worship God.”

This was the second time that John was so overwhelmed that he fell down at the feet of an angel. The first time was in [Rev. 19:10](#), after hearing the angel say, “*These are the true words of God.*” That particular statement carried great power, along with the later statement: “*These words are faithful and true*” that were spoken in [Rev. 21:5](#) and [22:6](#). Full revelation truth, when comprehended, is overwhelming.

Most people, however, are not so overwhelmed when they hear these words. This is because when such truth is spoken, it is usually veiled by Old Covenant mindsets, which hide the light and glory from most of mankind ([2 Cor. 3:13–17](#)). To them, truth has little impact.

The angel identifies himself as a man “*of your brethren the prophets*” and also a brother “*of those who heed the words of this book.*” An angel is a messenger and can be either a man or a spiritual being. A messenger of God is often both

a man and a spiritual being (angel). This is because everyone is assigned at least one angel in whom is the word of God, that is, a measure of the word.

When all are restored to the purpose for which they were created, they and their angels will become one, and each person will be a manifestation of the word which they have become by their unity with their angel. The spiritual messenger thus operates through the earthly messenger as the medium between heaven and earth. Such earthly messengers are, in effect, the first fruits of the great marriage between heaven and earth, the beginning of the two becoming “one flesh.”

Such men may be thought of as Jesus’ fellow *Memra*, the Hebrew equivalent of the *Logos*. No individual is a *Memra* in the full sense in which Christ is the living Word (total Word), but in the limited sense in which one becomes the manifestation of his or her own *portion* of the Word. Each one’s portion is defined and limited by the word that is in his or her angel(s).

So in the message to the seven churches, it is written, “to the angel of the church in Ephesus” ([Rev. 2:1](#)); or “to the angel of the church in Smyrna” ([Rev. 2:8](#)). The message was given to the *sheliach tzibbor*, the Hebrew name for the overseer of each church. The word of the Lord was written down by John and conveyed to each church overseer in order to give it to the people in the church. The overseer, who (presumably) had absorbed his angel and was thus able to hear the word of the Lord, was called an *angel*.

But who was this “angel” that gave the message to John on Patmos? We do not know if a prophet came to visit John on Patmos, or if the man was there already. If he was already there, it is likely that it was Prochorus, the disciple who, according to early church writings, gave up his freedom to accompany John and minister to him during his exile on the rugged island. Prochorus was one of the original deacons in [Acts 6:5](#). Prochorus was to John what Joshua was to Moses.

Yet John does not seem to know this “prophet,” so it is probably not Prochorus. The man/angel appears to be a glorified man, either from the past or from the future, who has fully absorbed his angel/word, thereby making him the Angel of the Approaching Fullness of God.

Do Not Seal the Book

Letters were sent by messengers in those days and were sealed with wax and imprinted with a crest or signature from a signet ring. Such seals were to prevent people from reading the contents of the letter during the journey. When Daniel was given his revelation, God told him to “*seal up the book until the end of time*” ([Dan. 12:4](#)), when the journey of time was completed.

But John’s book was to remain unsealed, because Christ had come, who was worthy (authorized) to open the book ([Rev. 5:5](#)). When the book was opened, the immediate revelation was about the restoration of all things, the final end and fulfillment of God’s New Covenant vow, mediated by Jesus Christ.

This restoration was revealed throughout the Old Testament, including the law of Moses and in the prophets (especially Isaiah); however, it was not clearly understood until Jesus came and the Holy Spirit was given at Pentecost.

[Rev. 22:10](#) says,

¹⁰ And he said to me, “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near.”

We see that while John was on Patmos in the late first century, he was not to seal the book, “*for the time is near*.” Indeed, most of the early church had an understanding of the restoration of all things and the salvation of all mankind, at least for the first four centuries. After that, this “faithful and true” word began to be suppressed in the year 400, as I explained in my booklet, [A Short History of Universal Reconciliation](#).

Because of this suppression and its replacement with the doctrine of eternal torment, championed by Augustine (354–430 A.D.), the church itself attempted to seal up the book, preventing the people from knowing the truly “good news” (gospel) of the New Covenant. For this and other reasons, Revelation has remained a sealed book to most Christians throughout the past. But from God’s point of view, it was never meant to be a sealed book.

Filthy and Clean Garments

The angel says in [Rev. 22:11](#),

¹¹ Let the one who does wrong still do wrong; and let the one who is filthy [*rhuparos*], still be filthy; and let the one who is righteous, still practice righteousness; and let the one who is holy, still keep himself holy.

The word picture behind being “filthy” is about being clothed in filthy garments. It is the same term used in the Septuagint (Greek) version of [Zech. 3:4](#), which speaks of Joshua the high priest:

³ Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments and standing before the angel. ⁴ And he spoke and said to those who were standing before him, saying, “Remove the filthy [*rhuparos*] garments from him.” Again he said to him, “See, I have taken your iniquity away from you and will clothe you with festal robes.”

This shows the difference between the two garments that we wear. Paul tells us that the present garment of mortality is what we received through Adam, while the second is the garment of immortality that is currently being reserved for us in heaven ([2 Cor. 5:1–4](#)). Obviously, the “filthy garments” represent the natural (soulish) body, which, since Adam’s sin, is full of “iniquity.” So Joshua’s garments were replaced, and his iniquity was taken away.

When John heard these words in [Rev. 22:11](#), he was speaking to the angel in his present time, when mankind was yet clothed in their filthy garments. Of course, in the legal sense, believers are imputed righteous, and so even though their heavenly garment is still reserved for them in the heavens, they are treated as if their filthy garments have been replaced by the robes of righteousness. They enjoy a positional righteousness through the feast of Passover, so that they need not be filled with guilt and fear over their iniquity, but rather can approach the throne of grace with confidence ([Heb. 4:16](#)).

In effect, John was told that prior to the final restoration of all things, life on earth would continue, and many would remain filthy, while some would be classed as “righteous” and “holy.”

This was a word that implied the need for patience. Even though Jesus said, “*I am coming quickly*,” His “quickly” is from a timeless perspective and ought not to be interpreted according to our short life spans. And so more than 1900 years have passed since John heard the words of this revelation.

Jesus Signs the Book

In [Revelation 22:12](#), [13](#) Jesus interrupts the angel and joins the conversation directly, saying,

¹² “Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done. ¹³ I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”

This is the second of three times when Jesus tells John, “*I am coming quickly*.” He said so earlier in verse 7 and will again say so in verse 20. Since the revelation is coming to an end, this also serves as a summation and a reminder that points back to the first chapter of the book. It is also a way of signing the book in order to identify the Author. Recall that in [Rev. 1:7](#) we read, “*Behold, He is coming with the clouds*,” and the next verse says,

⁸ **“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”**

Hence, “*the Lord God*” who spoke these words in [Rev. 1:8](#) is the One who is “*coming quickly*” in [Rev. 22:12](#). Jesus is the Coming One, and He is also “*the Lord God*” and “*the Almighty*.” Throughout the Old Testament, “*the Lord God*” normally translates either from the Hebrew Yahweh Elohim ([Gen. 2:5](#)) or Adonai Yahweh ([Ezekiel 2:4](#)).

Yahweh Elohim depicts the Creator and Covenanter in His relation to His creatures. Adonai Yahweh depicts the Creator as Owner (or “Lord”) of that which He has created. [John 1:3](#) tells us that Christ the Word (the *Logos*, or *Memra*) created all things. Paul tells us in [1 Tim. 2:5](#) that Jesus is the Mediator of the New Covenant—hence, He is the Covenanter as well as the Creator. The name Yahweh Elohim is how we ought to view “*the Lord God*” in [Rev. 1:8](#).

As for Adonai Yahweh, which is Ezekiel’s favorite term, God is depicted as having the right of ownership over that which He has created. The term not only establishes God’s sovereignty, but also His lawful right. By this title He claims the right to judge and to forgive at will, yet all is done in accordance with His character as the God of Love, Justice, and Mercy.

Therefore, He comes quickly with rewards in hand “*to render to every man according to what he has done*.” The righteous are rewarded with positions of authority and are given immortality sooner than those who are unrighteous. The unrighteous (during their life times on earth) are also rewarded, but not until they have been corrected and disciplined and have then proven themselves during the age of judgment.

The same “*Lord God*” in [Rev. 1:8](#) who claimed the title, “*Alpha and Omega*,” is the Coming One in [Rev. 22:13](#), Jesus Christ Himself. This title is, of course, a Greek way of expressing the Hebrew “*Alef and Tav*,” the first and last letters of the Hebrew alphabet. The *Alef* is the First Cause, and the *Tav* is the sign or signature at the end.

[Heb. 12:2](#) suggests also that He is “*the author and perfecter of faith*.” He is the Author of faith, because faith comes by hearing, and no one can hear unless God first speaks. He is the Perfecter of faith, because He develops our faith by testing it with “fire” ([1 Peter 1:6, 7](#)). The Greek word translated “Perfecter” is *teleiotes*, a consummator. Christ finishes what He starts, and when His work in us is done, we all come forth from the fire fully refined and perfected.

It is His right as the Creator and Owner of all to finish the work that He began at creation, and His success depends upon His ability to keep His New Covenant promise to make all mankind His people and to be their God ([Deut. 29:12–15](#)). Hence, when we come to the end of John’s revelation, we see Jesus laying claim not only to His rights, but also to His ability to complete that which He has authored.

The Blessed Ones

[Revelation 22:14, 15](#) continues,

¹⁴ Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city. ¹⁵ Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying.

This entire passage is written from the perspective of real time in John’s day. The prophecies of the future were completed in Revelation 20, and the description of the New Jerusalem (the goal of history) ended in [Rev. 22:5](#). The final section (addendum) of the book returns to real time as John perceived it.

Hence, John tells his readers that some are “*blessed*” and “*may enter by the gates into the city*,” while others are restricted by the walls and gates of the city. Believers even now (says John) have access to the New Jerusalem, because they have washed their robes. For some reason, the KJV says incorrectly: “*Blessed are they that do His*

commandments.” The Greek texts read, “*who wash their robes,*” and Panin’s Numeric New Testament confirms these Greek texts.

When God gave the Old Covenant to Israel, the people were first instructed to “*wash their garments*” ([Exodus 19:10, 14](#)) to prepare themselves to receive that covenant. The same requirement is found in receiving the New Covenant, except that the garments to be washed are no longer physical, but spiritual.

Washing garments was a requirement for cleansing, when a man touched an unclean animal ([Lev. 11:25](#)) or when a leper was being cleansed after his healing ([Lev. 14:8](#)). When priests were consecrated, they too had to “*wash their clothes, and they shall be clean*” ([Num. 8:7](#)). Though acceptable under the Old Covenant, all of these cleansing rituals did nothing to cleanse the heart. We are cleansed by the water of the word ([John 15:3](#)), which alone is sufficient to render us truly clean before God.

Such cleansing by the water of the word is a requirement to “*enter by the gates into the city.*” Those who are not cleansed must remain outside the city. Among them are those who despise the word (that is, the law). No doubt John recalled how those who were unclean had to stop outside the city of Jerusalem and cleanse themselves with ashes of a red heifer mixed with water before entering the city.

As John sees it, there is no such thing as a lawless believer, because all true believers actually believe the word, and the evidence of their belief (faith) is a change of behavior. True faith bears the fruit of righteousness.

Of course, as we have already shown, true believers are imputed righteous long before they are actually made righteous. The word brings continual cleansing, as we drink of the water from the river of life in our life time. Hence, the command to wash our garments has not been cast aside, but rather the *form* of the law has changed to suit the New Covenant. Physical water has been replaced by the water of the word.

The Root and Offspring of David

In [Rev. 22:16](#) Jesus again interjects a statement in the conversation, saying,

¹⁶ “I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright morning star.”

Jesus might have been the revelator throughout the book, but He chose to reveal the future through various angels, culminating with a climactic revelation of the New Jerusalem through the Angel of the Approaching Fullness of God. These revelations were given to instruct the churches, not only the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3, but all of the churches that would come later as well.

Jesus then identifies Himself by different terms. He is “*the root and the offspring of David,*” because He is the One prophesied in [Isaiah 11:1, 2](#),

¹ Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit. ² And the Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.

He is both the “root” and the “offspring” (i.e., the “shoot” or “branch”). This is another way of saying that He is the Alpha and Omega in relation to David. He was David’s son, but at the same time David called Him “lord.” Jesus questioned the Pharisees and Sadducees about this in [Luke 20:41–44](#),

⁴¹ And He said to them, “How is it that they say the Christ is David’s son? ⁴² For David himself says in the book of Psalms, ‘The Lord said to My Lord, “Sit at My right hand, ⁴³ until I make Thine enemies a footstool for Thy feet.”’ ⁴⁴ David therefore calls Him ‘Lord,’ and how is He his son?”

Jesus was quoting [Psalm 110:1](#), which, according to John Lightfoot, the Jews had commonly applied to Abraham and his submission to Melchizedek (i.e., Shem). It was believed that David wrote [Psalm 110:1](#) with the story of Shem in mind. However, the verse also applied to David himself, who was of the Melchizedek Order ([Psalm 110:4](#)).

This was also a well-known messianic prophecy, so the question was how the messiah could be both the son of David and also his “lord.” Sons honor their fathers according to the fifth commandment, but fathers do not normally call their sons “lord.” The point is that David recognized that his descendant, the Messiah, would be greater than himself. Both would be Melchizedek priests, but Jesus would be the ultimate High Priest of that order. In fact, Jesus pre-existed all men at the beginning of creation, so He preceded David and was therefore also his “lord.”

This truth is bound up in the fact that Jesus is both “*the root and the offspring of David*.” By pre-existing David, He was David’s “root.” Yet when He was born in Bethlehem, He came as “*the offspring of David*.” For further comments on this, see [chapter 15 of Dr. Luke: Healing the Breaches, Book 7](#).

The Bright Morning Star

In [Rev. 22:16](#) Jesus identifies Himself also as “*the bright morning star*.” Peter also calls Jesus by this title. In [2 Peter 1:19](#) we read,

¹⁹ And so we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts.

No doubt Peter was speaking of the same event that Paul referred to in [2 Thess. 1:10–12](#),

¹⁰ when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day and to be marveled at among all who have believed—for our testimony to you was believed... ¹² in order that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in Him ...

Not only does He “*come quickly*” as a distinct individual, He also arises IN US in a great show of unity, so that we ourselves appear in glory. The presence of Christ will shine forth from us when the veil of flesh is lifted and we are transfigured. This is the manifestation of the sons of God. It is one of the rewards given to the overcomers, specifically to the overcomers of the church of Thyatira in [Rev. 2:28](#).

The bright morning star was the herald of the dawn. The overcomers too are to shine forth the light of Christ during the dark night, for they too are heralds of the dawn of a new day after the beast systems have run their courses.

The Final Unveiling

[Revelation 22:17](#) gives the final invitation,

¹⁷ And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come.” And let the one who hears say, “Come.” And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.

The invitation is given by three entities: the Spirit, the bride, and the one who hears. One might think that the invitation would be given to those who have ears to hear, but in this case the invitation is given BY the hearing ones TO those “thirsty” ones who have not yet heard. These are the repentant lawbreakers outside the city that are referenced in [Rev. 22:15](#). The Spirit creates the thirst within men’s hearts, drawing them to the bride, which is the New Jerusalem. In other words, they are invited to be part of the bride-city, which is pictured as a marriage relationship with Christ.

This great invitation is a shortened version of [Isaiah 55:1–3](#), which says,

¹ Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. ² Why do you spend money for what is not bread,

and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, and delight yourself in abundance. ³ Incline your ear and come to Me. Listen, that you may live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, according to the faithful mercies shown to David.

In other words, John refers us to the invitation given by the prophet Isaiah, who invites us to “*come to the waters.*” John tells us that the “*waters*” are “*the water of life*” that flow “*from the throne of God and of the Lamb*” ([Rev. 22:1](#)). It also refers back to the “*spiritual rock*” ([1 Cor. 10:4](#)) in the wilderness, out of which flowed water to the people ([Exodus 17:6](#); [Num. 20:11](#)).

Because “*the rock was Christ*” and it was struck, it portrayed Christ, who was to be struck down by His death on the cross in order to bring the water of life to the people. The water, then, was costly, but He paid the price so that it could be available to “*you who have no money*” ([Isaiah 55:1](#)). Hence also, John says the water is given “*without cost*” (to the invited ones).

Adding to the Word

[Revelation 22:18](#), [19](#) continues,

¹⁸ I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God shall add to him the plagues which are written in this book; ¹⁹ and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book.

This injunction does not refer to the Bible as a whole, but to “*the prophecy of this book,*” that is, the book of Revelation. Even so, what is true for the book of Revelation is equally true for the entire word of God. It is an extension of the law in [Deut. 19:14](#),

¹⁴ You shall not move your neighbor’s boundary mark, which the ancestors have set, in your inheritance which you shall inherit in the land that the Lord your God gives you to possess.

The word of God sets the boundaries of revelation in the Kingdom. Any personal revelation ought to support and to clarify the revelation that God has already given. This ought not to restrict personal revelation, for all are admonished in Scripture to hear His voice. But we should view the Scriptures as a boundary mark of truth, and all personal revelation should conform to the parameters of Scripture. Ultimately, the Spirit and the Word should agree as one.

In the beginning, we read in [Genesis 2:16](#), [17](#),

¹⁶ And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; ¹⁷ but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die.”

Later, when the serpent tempted Eve, he said to her in [Genesis 3:1](#), “*Indeed, has God said, ‘You shall not eat from any tree of the garden’?*”

Eve’s answer added to God’s injunction, for we read in [Genesis 3:2](#), [3](#),

² And the woman said to the serpent, “From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; ³ but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat from it or touch it, lest you die’.”

She added “or touch it” to God’s word, which the serpent was able to exploit. It is self-evident that she had to touch the tree before eating of its fruit. When she did, and found that nothing bad happened to her, she was easily convinced that God’s word was untrue, and this emboldened her to eat of its fruit.

This shows also how the traditions of men (adding to the word and thereby nullifying it) have turned many aside from following the genuine commands of God. Jesus thus quotes Isaiah in [Matt. 15:8, 9](#) chiding the Pharisees and scribes for forbidding men to eat with unwashed hands (the issue in [Matt. 15:2](#)). There was no such law, and yet they criticized the disciples as if they were sinners for eating without first pouring water over their hands to cleanse them.

When men believe that their additions to the word of God are genuine truth from God, they stumble when someone disagrees or departs from those man-made precepts. When this becomes a sin to them, then they come under the natural consequences of violating the law. These natural consequences are called “plagues” in [Rev. 22:18](#). In [Deut. 28:15](#) they are called “curses,” that is, the curse or judgment for sin that is written in the law.

Signing the book

[Revelation 22:20](#) says,

²⁰ He who testifies to these things says, “Yes, I am coming quickly.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. ²¹ The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.

Although the messengers (angels) were the agents by which the words of this prophecy were conveyed to John, the words were actually from “*the Lord Jesus*.” So He signs His name to the book at the end, and John, the notary, bears witness to His signature with his “*Amen. Come, Lord Jesus*.”

The book of Revelation is given a title in the opening statement of the book in [Rev. 1:1](#), which literally reads, “The Unveiling of Jesus Christ.” The word *apokalupsis* literally means to unveil, reveal, or manifest. It is about Christ’s *coming*, as He is unveiled slowly throughout history until the full unveiling at the end of time. By the revelation of the New Covenant, the veil is lifted from our eyes.

To a few He is unveiled very early, as men and women come to drink of the water of life in the early ages of earth history. As time passes, Christ is unveiled to more and more people. At the end of the Pentecostal Age, when the first resurrection raises all the overcomers from the dead, He begins to be unveiled to greater numbers of people, as the Kingdom of Light is established with Christ’s jurisdiction over specific portions of the earth itself. The Spirit is poured out, and much of the earth sees the light of Christ.

Then at the Great White Throne, all will see Him, as they are summoned for judgment. Yet even then, the newly-converted sinners who have bowed their knees and have sworn allegiance to Him will have only one or two veils removed from their eyes. It is as if they have entered the gate into the outer court (Passover) and have been filled with the Spirit (Pentecost). But they will have to grow to maturity during that final Age until they are set free in the great Jubilee. Only then will they be fully in the image of Christ and are qualified to see the unveiled Christ in His full glory.

The unveiling of Jesus Christ is a historical process, even as each individual sees Christ increasingly unveiled over his life time. In the end, it requires absolute perfection to see the unveiled Christ without fear and without separation.

Ancient texts

Anastasius Sinaita (Fragment IX)
City of God, by Augustine, Bishop of Hippo
Commentary in the Epistle to the Romans, by Origen
Commentary on II Peter, by Didymus the Blind
Epistle of Barnabas
Ecclesiastical History, by Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea
In [Eph. 4:16](#), Jerome, Bishop of Bethlehem
Josephus, Complete Works (1867 translation)
On [John 2:2](#), by Clement of Alexandria
The Apocrypha: 2 Maccabees
The Histories, by Herodotus, edited by E. V. Rieu (1954)

Reference Books

A Dictionary of Angels, (1994), by Gustav Davidson
A Flood of Light upon the Book of Revelation, (c. 1940's, but no publishing date is given), by John S. Fox
A History of the Popes, (1939), by Joseph McCabe
A Light in Darkness, Seven Messages to the Seven Churches, Vol. I, (2016), by Rick Renner
A Short History of Byzantium, (1997), by John Julius Norwich
An Introduction to the History of Khazaria, (1996, revised 2014), by Kevin Alan Brook (online)
Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. I, (1994), American Edition, edited by Alexander Roberts, D.D. and James Donaldson, LL.D.
Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*
Ignatius of Antioch, *Epistle to the Magnesians*
Ignatius of Antioch, *Epistle to the Trallians*
Justin Martyr, *First Apology*
Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. II, (1994), American Edition, edited by Alexander Roberts, D.D. and James Donaldson, LL.D.
Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata*
Clement of Alexandria, *Ecl. Proph.*
Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. III, (1994), American Edition, edited by Alexander Roberts, D.D. and James Donaldson, LL.D.
Tertullian, *Apology*
Tertullian, *Prescription against Heretics*
Tertullian, *de Spectaculis*
Asimov's Chronology of the World, (1991), by Isaac Asimov
Black's Law Dictionary (online)
Complete History of the Popes of Rome, Including the History of Saints, Martyrs, Fathers of the Church, Religious Orders, Cardinals, Inquisitions, Schisms, and the Great Reformers, Vol. I and II, (1850), by Louis Marie de Cormenin
Constantine's Sword, The Church and the Jews, (2001), by James Carroll
Didache, The Unknown Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, (1991), edited by Brent S. Walters, Curator, Ante-Nicene Archive

History of the Christian Church, Vol. III, (1867), by Philip Schaff
History of the Christian Church, Vol. IV, (1885), by Philip Schaff
History of the Reformation in the Time of Calvin, (1863), by J. H. Merle d'Aubigne
How the Irish Saved Civilization, (1995), by Thomas Cahill
Fathers of the Latin Church, (1960) by Hans von Capenhausen, Prof. of Ecclesiastical History in the University of Heidelberg
Holy Blood Holy Grail, (1982), by Laurence Gardner
Marvels of Prophecy, (1959), by Howard B. Rand
Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible, Vol. III (1710, reprinted in 1979), by Matthew Henry and Thomas Scott
Morals and Dogma of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, (1871, revised 1950), Albert Pike
Newsweek Magazine (May 6, 2002), What Would Jesus Do? Beyond the Priest Scandal; Christianity at a Crossroads
Pawns in the Game, (1959), by Cmdr. William Guy Carr
Romanism and the Reformation, (1887) by H. Grattan Guinness
Rulers of Evil, Useful Knowledge about Governing Bodies, (1999), by F. Tupper Saussy
Secret Societies and Subversive Movements, (1924), by Nesta Webster
The Age of Faith, A History of Medieval Civilization—Christian, Islamic, and Judaic—from Constantine to Dante: A.D. 325–1300, (1950) by Will Durant
The Bad Popes, (1969), by E. R. Chamberlin
The Birth of Purgatory, (1986), by Jaques le Goff
The Cambridge Bible Commentary, by A.W. Argyle,
The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, (1787) by Edward Gibbon
The Feast of Tabernacles, (1952), by George Warnock
The Glory of the Stars, (1976), by Prof. E. Raymond Capt
The Gospel in the Stars, (1882), Joseph Seiss
The Great Controversy, Its Origin and History, (1886), by John A. Logan, Civil War General
The House of Rothschild, Vol. I, (1998), by Niall Ferguson
The House of Rothschild, Vol. II, (1999), by Niall Ferguson
The Jesuits, (1987), by Malachi Martin
The Knights Templar in the New World, (1999), by William E. Mann
The Latter Rain, by Jay Atkinson (online article)
The Outline of History, (1920), by H. G. Wells
The Secret Architecture of our Nation's Capital (1999), by David Ovason
The Temple, (1874), by Alfred Edersheim
The Thirteenth Tribe, (1976), by Arthur Koestler
The Witness of the Stars, (1893), by E. W. Bullinger
The Wycliffe Bible Commentary (1962), edited by Charles F. Pfeiffer (Old Testament) and Everett F. Harrison (New Testament)
World Revolution, (1921), by Nesta Webster

Encyclopedias

Thayer's Greek Lexicon (online)
The Catholic Encyclopedia (online)
The Encyclopedia Britannica (online)
The Encyclopedia of World History, Ancient, Medieval, and Modern Chronologically Arranged, (2001) edited by Peter Stearns
The Revelation: Book 8 - Bibliography

The Expositor's Bible, Vol. VI, (1940), edited by W. Robertson Nicoll
The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (online)
The Jewish Encyclopedia (1903 edition)
The Wikipedia (online)

Bibles

The Concordant Literal New Testament
The Emphatic Diaglott
The Emphasized Bible (Rotherham)
The King James Bible
The New American Standard Bible
Young's Literal Translation of the Holy Bible

Books by Dr. Stephen Jones also Referenced

[A Short History of Universal Reconciliation](#)
[Daniel: Prophet of the Ages, Book 2](#)
[Deuteronomy, The Second Law, Book 10: Final Prophecies](#)
[Dr. Luke: Healing the Breaches, Book 1, The Beginning](#)
[Dr. Luke: Healing the Breaches, Book 2, The Foundations](#)
[Dr. Luke: Healing the Breaches, Book 7, The Conflict](#)
[Dr. Luke: Healing the Breaches, Book 8, The Climax](#)
[How to Be an Overcomer](#)
[Lessons from Church History, Vol. III](#)
[Old and New Covenant Marriage](#)
[Secrets of Time](#)
[The Biblical Meaning of Numbers from One to Forty](#)
[The Judgments of the Divine Law](#)
[The Problem of Evil](#)
[The Prophetic Roots of Modern Abortion](#)
[The Purpose of Resurrection](#)
[The Struggle for the Birthright](#)
[The Wars of the Lord, A Short History of Spiritual Warfare in Our Time](#)
[The Wheat and Asses of Pentecost](#)
[Who is a Jew?](#)
[Who is an Israelite?](#)

Angels in the Book of Revelation

Angel of Constraint ([Rev. 9:1](#); [20:1](#))
Angel of Hastening Hope ([Rev. 14:6](#))
Angel of Abundant Clarity of Love ([Rev. 14:8](#))
Angel of Severance ([Rev. 14:9](#))
Threshing Angel ([Rev. 14:15](#))
Vintage Angel ([Rev. 14:17](#))
Angel of Fire ([Rev. 14:18](#))
The Redemption Angel ([Rev. 16:1](#); [17:1](#))
The Cleansing Angel ([Rev. 16:3](#))
The Appearing of Sons Angel ([Rev. 16:4](#))
All Consuming Breath Angel ([Rev. 16:8](#))
Overcoming Flesh Angel ([Rev. 16:10](#))
Angel of Pure Influence ([Rev. 16:12](#))
Angel of the approaching Fullness of God ([Rev. 16:17](#))
Angel of Faith's Righteousness ([Rev. 18:1](#))
Releasing Captives Angel ([Rev. 18:4](#))
Judging the Lawless Angel ([Rev. 18:21](#))
Peace Angel ([Rev. 19:17](#))